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CONTEMPORARY GERMAN POETRY

AN ANTHOLOGY

CHOSEN AND TRANSLATED BY
BABETTE DEUTSCH
AND
AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY

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TO
ADAM

Acknowledgments

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Foreword

The lyrics included in this book were selected from the work of the German and Austrian poets of approximately the last four decades. They were chosen as far as possible on the basis of their æsthetic worth,—a choice admittedly biassed by personal taste. At the same time there was an effort to present such material as would mirror the trend of culture and the temper of the period covered. The first part of the volume presents a limited number of individual poets who have impressed themselves upon contemporary German lyricism. The second part relinquishes interests in personalities and offers a group of poems designed to convey the mood and manner of current German verse.

The authors whose poems are contained in the first section of the book can show a definite artistic achievement, a mastery of music, a richness of imagery, a sophisticated spirituality. As we approach the younger poets we find more of fevered experimentation and passionate subjectivity. Their work is marked by those humours, that confusion, that hovering eschatological anguish, which makes the contemporary German mind tolerant of formlessness and inclines the most reticent to fits of glossolalia. Order and measure are not the lineaments of Judgment, and so the sober-minded may find some of the inclusions warped or exaggerated or hysterical. The

editors were continually hampered by the fact that the poems most expressive of times which are out of joint are too broken and obscure to bear translation. Many poems and a few poets were omitted because of this peculiar difficulty. The dissimilitude between contemporary German verse and the poised, shrewd, disciplined poetry which is now being written in English added considerably to the normal difficulties of translation and selection. The technique of the originals, especially in respect to cadence, metre, and rhyme-scheme was followed as closely as possible, yet in every instance the paramount consideration was not accuracy, but the desire to present a composition which would be as truly a poem as a translation of a poem.

In most cases the editors were fortunate in securing the cooperation of the poets, and the material for the biographical notes at the end of the volume was for the most part furnished specially for the book by the men themselves. Their letters express the somewhat naïve hope that this miscellany may add a cubit to the bridge of understanding and reconciliation between the two peoples. This hope, however touched with skepticism, the editors did not surrender in offering the book.

BABETTE DEUTSCH,
AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY.

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK,
September 5, 1922.

Contents

	PAGE
FOREWORD	vii
INTRODUCTION	xiii

PART I: MASTERS

DETLEV VON LILIENCRON

Winter Scene	5
Acherontic Chill	6
After Partridge Shooting	7
Sphinx Among the Roses	8
Early Spring at the Woods' Edge	9
Deep Longing	10
Storm	11
The Birch Tree	12
Time	14

ARNO HOLZ

Phantassus: I, 8	17
— III, 25	18
— IV, 4	19
— VI, 3	20
— VI, 12	22
— VI, 14	23
— VI, 20	24
— VII, 3	25
— VII, 12	26

RICHARD DEHMEL

Welcome	29
Song Before Night	30
The Great Carousel	31
Mountain Psalm	32
The Workingman	34
The Harp	35
The Swimmer	37
Song to My Son	38

	PAGE
MAX DAUTHENDEY	
Deep in the Nosegay	43
The Moon Is a Fiery Rose	44
"We Walk by the Sea"	45
The Rain Seems Possessed	46
Every Leaf Tends Earthward	47
Love's Calendar: March	48
— July	49
— August	50
— November	51
STEFAN GEORGE	
"Come to the Park"	55
"We Wander Up and Down"	56
"When My Hot Lips"	57
"You Know Not Who I Am"	58
The Mistaking	59
From Out the Glow	60
"From Nether Dark"	61
"Dark Burned the Sunset"	62
RAINER MARIA RILKE	
Spanish Dancer	65
The Carousel	66
Quai du Rosaire	68
Blue Hydrangeas	69
Autumn	70
The Old Woman	71
"The Monarchs of the World"	72
Pietà	73
"You, Neighbor God"	74
"Be Not Afraid, God"	75
"What Will You Do, God?"	77
"Put Out My Eyes"	78
"We Are All Workmen"	79
ALFRED MOMBERT	
"On the Stairs Leading to My Marble Halls"	83
"In the Temple's Midst"	84
"Project for a New World"	85
"From the Creator's Throne God Fell"	86
Demon	87
CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN	
Cloud Fantasies: I	91
Moon Tableaux: IV	92
Moonrise	93

Contents

xi

	PAGE
"On the Staircase"	95
Night Song of the Fish	96
The Wooden Fence	97
"Black as a Nun"	98
The Bird of Sadness	99
"O World, Let Me Behold"	100
Necessity	101
First Snow	102
ELSE LASKER-SCHÜLER	
Reconciliation	105
Palm Song	106
End of the World	107
My Love Song	108
Sphinx	110
To You	111
FRANZ WERFEL	
The Man in the Mirror	115
The Divine Door-Keeper	117
Heavenly Father at Evening	118
Moon Song of a Girl	120
An Old Woman Passes	122
The Widow at the Bed of Her Son	124
For I Am Yet a Child	126
Now I Am Filled with Death	129
Ballad of the Followers	130

PART II: THE YOUNGER GROUP

ADOLF VON HATZFELD: The Hunt	135
MAX BROD: Goldfish on the Writing Desk	137
IWAN GOLL: Caravan of Longing	139
ALBERT EHRENSTEIN: Home-Coming	140
ALBERT EHRENSTEIN: Homer	141
WILHELM KLEMM: Reflections	142
ALBERT EHRENSTEIN: Suffering	143
GEORG TRAKL: Amen	144
ARMIN T. WEGNER: The Head	145
IWAN GOLL: Eternal Shipwreck	146
KLABUND: Fever	147
GOTTFRIED BENN: Morgue	148

	PAGE
GOTTFRIED BENN: Man and Woman Go Through the Cancer Ward	150
GEORG HEYM: The Demons of the Cities	152
PAUL ZECH: Machinery	155
RUDOLF LEONHARDT: The Dead Liebknecht	156
KURT HEYNICKE: Gethsemane	157
JOHANNES R. BECHER: The Children's Crusade	158
ALBERT EHRENSTEIN: Ares	159
PAUL MAYER: Thersites	161
WILHELM KLEMM: The Battle of the Marne	162
KURT HEYNICKE: Observation Post	163
ALFRED VAGTS: Memories in Hospital	164
IWAN GOLL: Torso	165
ADOLF VON HATZFELD: Summer	166
KLABUND: The Poet to His Beloved	168
ERNST STADLER: In the Morning	169
PAUL MAYER: Fourteen Stations of Love, XIII	170
RENÈ SCHICKELE: Ballad of Our Dear Lady of the Rail- way Carriage	171
KURT HEYNICKE: At Midnight	172
MAX HERRMANN-NEISSE: Legend of the Bewitched Nunnery	173
CLAIRE STUDER-GOLL: Prayer	174
THEODOR DÄUBLER: The Arc-Lamps	175
KLABUND: Journey from Copenhagen to Skodsborg	176
KLABUND: The Wind Strode Wildly	177
GEORG HEYM: Evening	178
WILHELM KLEMM: Night	179
PAUL MAYER: Winter	180
IWAN GOLL: The Pear-Tree	181
ALFRED LICHTENSTEIN: Fog	182
GEORG HEYM: Moon	183
KURT HEYNICKE: Exaltation	185
GOTTFRIED BENN: Songs	186
WHO'S WHO IN CONTEMPORARY GERMAN POETRY	187
INDEX OF AUTHORS	201

Introduction

It was only a decade after the founding of the Empire that German poetry struggled up out of the slough of sentimentality into which it had fallen since, roughly speaking, Heine's death. Fierce young men arose in the eighties of the last century to protest against a literature divorced from life, against smooth sweet stanzas, as monotonously pretty as Dresden china and equally artificial. They denounced an art which had reduced itself to a social accomplishment like the use of the foils, an art bearing no relation to the authenticities of emotional and intellectual experience. These iconoclasts, who were pleased to give the name "Naturalism" to their theories and practices, were moved by the impulse to apprehend and to represent raw reality. Under such foreign influences as Zola, Ibsen, and Tolstoy, they plunged into the confusion, the ugliness, the misery of the streets and factories and tenements about them. A sharp social conscience prodded their art and urged them to demand an indigenous literature, dealing with common experience in the idiom of daily life.

Liliencron and Naturalism

Into the circle of these rebellious youths strayed a man of forty, who had just published his first book of verse. It is certain that Detlev von Liliencron fought on the

side of Naturalism, swinging as lusty a sword in this battle of the books as he had in the armies of the Prussian king. It is somewhat less certain that Liliencron's poetry is a justification and an expression of the naturalist doctrines. He is the giant among writers whose work seldom rose above the mediocrities of a scattered Wilfred Wilson Gibson or the occasional quality of rhymed literary manifestoes. This active, sensuous man, living wholly for the moment, and writing while the taste of his experience was still sharp upon his tongue, surely made immediate contacts with life. But the temperament upon which bivouac and bussing, the feel of a fowling-piece, and the face of a creditor were so vividly impressed, was by the same token a temperament which unfitted the poet for a sustained and coherent transcription of reality.

Liliencron was too deeply immersed in the business of living to be genuinely concerned with art. Stevenson confessed that he would exchange his fame "for a good seventy ton schooner and the coins to keep her on." Liliencron wrote in 1889, at the age of forty-five, that he would give the whole batch of his writings for one day on the battle-field with his comrades-at-arms. Years later he declared that he valued horse-dealing and palaver with gypsies and peasants at roadside inns more highly than the making of verses. And so his poetry is the product of a mind turned outward, generously receptive, but incapable of reflection and abstraction. His is, in a sense, peripheral poetry. Like the painters of the Barbizon school, he took his art into the air and the light; but his interest was in man rather than in nature.

Liliencron was a fertile poet, but also an uneven one.

At his worst, he is a feuilleton-writer, lax both as to style and feeling, committing the sins of both verbosity and sentimentality. At his best he shows a controlled and genuine emotion and exhibits the virtues of a gifted impressionist with a sensitive eye and ear. He has that economy of line, that firmness of touch which are the charm and distinction of a fine etching. He couples with this a musical quality which has made his poems ready material for such composers as Brahms and Richard Strauss. Some of his most evocative work is in the strict and narrow confines of the Sicilian stanza, an octave on two rhymes, although occasionally he employs free rhythms felicitously. The vital essence of his art is a hospitality of sympathy, an intimacy with the furniture of his world, and a sensuous appreciation of it.

Characteristically enough, this poet was completely innocent of æsthetic theory. Asked several years before his death what he believed to be the aim and substance of his art, he declared that he had never considered the matter. Arno Holz, one of Liliencron's fellow-combatants under the naturalist banner, is, on the contrary, a passionate doctrinaire as well as an authentic lyricist. He began by publishing (in 1885) a book of verse (*Buch der Zeit*) which aimed at modernity at any price. It denounced the insipid classicism of his elders and summoned the poet into mine and workshop, prison and hospital. But it offered only a cerebral enthusiasm expressed in facile "journalese." His further work was in the nature of experiments in naturalistic fiction and drama. Indeed, Hauptmann acknowledges Holz as his master. The last year of the century he published the

second fascicule of his *Phantasia*, a cycle of poems which has since been growing gradually, although it is still in the state of a torso. At the same time he brought out a brief exposition of his theory of poetic technique under the blatant title: "The Revolution of Lyricism." Here he ruthlessly ostracizes conventional metre, strophe, and rhyme. Metre, Holz believes, imposes a preconceived musical pattern under which the substance of poetry necessarily suffers. He bids the poet listen for the rhythm inherent in the mood which he is striving to express, and varying with each poetic motif. Anticipating many of the tenets of our imagists, he insists on the abolition of the merely decorative word, and on the production of a hard, clear, concentrated poetry. He maintains that a poem consists of lines which are practically independent rhythmic units, the cadence of each depending upon its image and mood. Further, these units range themselves about a central axis, made apparent by means of centering the lines which vary widely in length. The doctrine finds its place in the general movement away from conventional metres.

Holz offered this theory as both an exposition and a justification of his practice in *Phantasia*. He has also vouchsafed an explanation of the principle of its composition. Just as his embryo, he holds, recapitulated the history of the species, so after birth he goes through the same process in the psychic realm. "I have been all things, and their relics lie within me, many and motley." What he does in *Phantasia*, he assures us, is to break up his personality into all the heterogeneous avatars which it has endured in the past. Theorizing aside, what we

find in this poetic encyclopedia is a rich miscellany of the grotesque and the satiric, the lyrical and the burlesque, the elegiac and the fantastic. There is a titanic imagination at work here, now cutting a perfect cameo, now scratching the surface of a fallen meteor, an imagination which can curl up in a petal or span a planet. Holz recently issued a new edition of another immense work, his *Blechschmiede*, also written in verse. This is a huge nondescript "Pandivinium or, if you like, Pandemonium," travesty of mankind with a Rabelaisian amplitude, and aiming at a synthesis of the modern world in a profane extravaganza as Dante synthesized the medieval world in the Divine Comedy.

The work of Richard Dehmel, far more than that of Holz, is rooted in Naturalism, with its materialistic outlook, its social bias, and its impressionistic style. His interest in the life of the masses is in the tradition of the school. He is oppressed by his distance from the hard, sweaty, circumscribed lives of the workers, and he tries to bridge this gap by a cry of understanding, of pity, and of staunch hope. Stronger than his social preoccupation, however, is the individualistic, Nietzschean strain in his poetry. The vigor of abundant vitality plays through his work, however sicklied o'er by the subtler doubts and despairs with which modern man is beset. Like Liliencron, he celebrated the life of the senses, but he wore his boutonnière with a difference. Often Dehmel looked inward, vainly striving to reconcile or to transcend the conflict between flesh and spirit. His vast lyrical *œuvre* reflects a mind intent not only upon denoting the pageant of life, but eager to evaluate and interpret it in

terms of Nietzsche's moral maximalism. He differs from Liliencron in another respect also. In a neat sestet Dehmel's older friend declared that a true poet is born a naturalist, but that two things are added unto him by the fairies: humor, and the hand of the artist. Humor Dehmel had, as witness his poems for and about his children, but as an artist he lacks distinction. It must be remembered, however, that his writings enjoy a great vogue with his compatriots, and have exercised a strong influence upon modern German literature and culture generally.

The Symbolists and Mystics

The naturalist movement was scarcely in full swing when a group of poets inaugurated a reaction against it. For these men, social problems became anathema. Tenuous moods and patterns of color and sound replaced moral exhortation and photographic realism. The effort was to suggest rather than to depict, since the emphasis was always on those things and relations which can only be expressed indirectly by means of symbols. There was some toying with perversity and much burning of incense to beauty. In this respect Germany was only offering a parallel to the *fin de siècle* complex of æstheticism, symbolism, and *décadence* which was shaping the poetry of France, England, and Russia. The German school is identified with Stefan George and his circle. The naturalists had yielded themselves to the stern tutelage of the Scandinavians and the Russians, while George and his followers were indebted to the French symbolists and

harked back to the native romanticist tradition. George's poetry is a conscious and disciplined flight from reality, an attitude to which he had a tropismatic inclination. He had the æsthete's contemptuous distaste for a method which demanded immersion in the earthly and the commonplace, which presupposed a materialistic philosophy and which tolerated a loose, vulgar style. In his poetry we find an aloof spirituality, the cold, keen, rarefied atmosphere of pure abstraction, in which cryptic images are moved like chess-men in some inscrutable and supernatural game. With the rigid equanimity of a pontiff and the exquisite gesture of an aristocrat, he erects a barrier between himself and the public. "*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*" is written all over his work. He retires behind difficult idiom and obscure symbolism, and turns the lock with a confusing punctuation and a delicate, deluding typography. Impatient as one may be of these mannerisms, one cannot but admire the persistence with which he refused to commercialize his art, satisfied to be read and appreciated by the few.

George's themes are all lyrical: a memory, a spiritualized landscape, ethereal passion, the seasons of the soul. If the stuff of his poetry is abstract, the style must bear the weight of sensuous suggestion and evocation. His learned use of tone-color, the pause and balance of his syllables, the pattern of his consonants and vowels reveal a craftsmanship admirable in its precision, although alienating in its rigidity.

Hebbel's aphorism to the effect that the poet wraps the world about him for comfort like a cloak applies less to George than to his followers. Of these Max Dauthendey

is one of the better known and least faithful. He was an extremely prolific writer and an uneven poet. As a young man he studied painting, and one recognizes the visual-minded artist in the luxuriant imagery which fills his verse. He crowds into a brief lyric the riotous colors, the hot fragrances, the sun-edged shapes of a midsummer garden. With George he was under the influence of the French symbolists, but he has none of his fellow-poet's obscurities, none of his sacerdotal gestures and chilly intellectualism.

The spirituality whose pale blossoms we find in George's work comes to rich fruition in the mysticism of Rainer Maria Rilke. Liliencron blithely plucked a nosegay of flowers, pulling up some weeds with them; George selects the rarest blooms to distil an attar therefrom; Rilke, sensitive and passive, waits for the rose to yield him the fragrance of its secret life. He holds aloof from things in order more perfectly to comprehend their inner significance. The world is for him a vessel brimming with grace, a cup which he dare not touch, lest it overspill. Rilke's early poems are gracile lyrics capturing wistful moods in the nets of a delicate imagery. Already here the madonna motif frequently recurs, and the poet lingers in dim cloister and lonely cathedral close. In the later poems, especially in *Stundenbuch* (which appeared in 1905), Rilke waits upon his God at every corner, in every room. Yet it is not the orthodox divinity whom he seeks, but rather that groping God whom only human patience shapes and solitary faith foreknows, the God who is the son and heir of man. For all his heterodoxy, however, the stream of Rilke's mysticism is bedded in the

Gothic tradition. He has the simple piety of a Franciscan monk, coupled with that pleasure in the symbols of Catholic ritual which is reminiscent of Francis Thompson. Indeed, in spite of his aloofness and asceticism, Rilke displays in all his work a mastery of imagery which derives from sensuous appreciations. The mystic's certainties and surrenders speak the scented idiom of the orchard and the vineyard, the language of homely and familiar things. He has an unfailing ear and his resonant rhymes echo with a contrapuntal beauty. This exquisitely disciplined and concentrated art, which feeds upon both spiritual insight and shrewd visualization, is the high water-mark of contemporary German poetry.

The religious bias is visible also in the work of such a poet as Christian Morgenstern, more especially in his later books. Morgenstern is, however, best known as the author of grotesque poems, some of which caricature the prevalent positivist philosophy. His light verse, even when it is serious in intent, is as full of delicious folly as "Alice in Wonderland." His poetic evolution was from a smiling skepticism to a God-intoxicated affirmation of the world. If Morgenstern's humor is full of seriousness, the unrelieved solemnity of his contemporary, Alfred Mombert, involuntarily verges on the ludicrous. He weights his verse down with an obtrusive intellectualism and manipulates images created on so stupendous a scale that the reader's mind often shrinks from accepting them. His gigantic imaginings, his flights through infinities of time and space, but rarely result in poetry. Too often the impression he gives is less that of the mystic yielding up his individuality to the divine drama than that of the

ego-driven master of cosmic stage-properties. And yet Mombert remains one of the few poets who occasionally succeed in conveying their sense of the cosmic. It is worth noting that he preceded Holz in the use of free rhythms, involving the surrender of rhyme and stanza.

Expressionism and the Younger Group

Within the last decade a crop of young poets has sprung up, striving for a new gesture with which to express their consciousness. They have a mentality and sensibility distinct both from the attitude of the naturalist, living contentedly if meagerly in his objective world, and from that of the symbolists who, like George and Rilke, celebrated in their serene solitude a super-sensuous reality, either æsthetic or mystic. The term "expressionism," which a French painter was the first to use as the title of several of his canvases exhibited in 1901, has been bestowed, somewhat carelessly, upon the work of these younger men. This catchword, like romanticism in its time, is all things to all critics. It should not be taken to imply a unity of program and practice. Aside from the coteries clustered about such periodicals as *Der Sturm* and *Aktion*, there is no self-constituted expressionist school. What one finds is rather a number of recurrent motifs, an eccentric febrile technique, a heightened emotional tonus, which is shared by poets of widely varying character.

With the French a literary movement remains within the limits of art, with the Russians it tends to become a morality, with the Germans—a metaphysics. Thus, both the critics and the exponents of the new art are intent

upon formulating its philosophical principle. They find this in the passionate assertion of the primacy of the spirit of man over the material world. A contributor to *Der Sturm* has defined expressionism as "the spiritual movement of a period which places the inner experience above external life." Such a definition obviously includes a poet like George or Rilke, but the expressionist differs from the symbolist in imposing his vision upon the world and thereby distorting it almost past recognition for the realistically-minded. A sick, super-sensitive spirit, whose frail nerves, as Ermatinger says of Trakl, are torn by the world "as a spider-web is torn by a stone," he revenges himself upon the world by destroying its coherence and undoing its materiality. In a broken cosmos there is no place for an organized work of art. The poet's inner chaos is reflected in the unfulfilled imagery, in the fragmentary cadences, in the very syntax of his lyrics.

Else Lasker-Schueler too dissolves the world, but with this difference, that she pours its fluid mass into the golden bowl of passion. Her feminine instinct impels her to salvage what she can from the wreck, to build therewith a shelter for the personal emotion. In this respect she differs from most of her contemporaries, who do not love the individual less, but who love humanity more. Her work has the primitive colors, the warmth and languor redolent of Eastern poetry, and her love lyrics seem to have sprung from the same soil that nourished the Song of Songs. It may be interesting to note that she is one of the few women writing verse in Germany today.

Handling his world with the congenial freedom of a

demiurge, the poet arrogates to himself the right to make the language which will express it. All traditional forms are discarded and only rhythm is retained as the striving, anarchic, inconclusive principle of existence. Hence, license with syntax and neologistic word-formation. It is here that the new German poetry has a point of contact with futurism, and offers the sternest resistance to the translator. Generally speaking, much of the new poetry has the cryptic quality of ego-centric expression, revelling in idiosyncrasies and careless of communication. There is here food for the ironist, since perhaps the leit-motif of these writings is the impulse toward human brotherhood and the emphatic affirmation of charity for all and malice toward none.

A strain of compassion for all forms of life, even the lowest and vilest of creatures, a wistful humility, acknowledging man's kinship with brute creation, marks the work of many poets, but finds its strongest and simplest expression in that of Franz Werfel. Werfel is a modern St. Sebastian, his body pierced by all the arrows that inhumanity and poverty and war, that sickness and failure and our common mortality have ever driven into quivering flesh. Poetry has been defined as emotion recollected in tranquillity. If Werfel's poetry is sometimes ineffectual, it is because he is too bruised to find the necessary condition of tranquillity. With all his overwhelming sense of wrong, there is for Werfel no Job-like posing of the problem of evil, but rather a sense of personal responsibility and guilt. His indiscriminate and somewhat hysterical sympathy wears a seamless garment of piety. There is a simplicity and directness about his

verse, a homeliness, in both senses of the word, and an intrusive quaintness. The fact that this man is unanimously recognized as the pre-eminent representative of his generation indicates that the temper of the times is attuned to an ethical and religious attitude toward life. The religiosity is mystical, and the ethics concerns itself only with moral absolutes, such as justice and loving-kindness, thereby differing from the Naturalist's interest in the minutiae of social reform.

Werfel has been justly likened to Francis Jammes, for his naïve faith and his cult of childhood. But he differs from the Frenchman in that the poet, as the man, dwells in the large city. Indeed, the poetry of the present generation is for the most part urban. It swings with the harsh rhythms of an industrial civilization; it cries with the raucous voice of the machine. It thrills to electric tension and celebrates stone and steel; it shudders with the apocalyptic vision of doomed Babylons; it wreathes roses of cement about the brow of Berlin; it aches with the solitude of peopled places; it is heavy with the foreboding of the explosion brewing in these vast crucibles.

When the explosion broke it sent men's hopes tumbling like ninepins. Sunk in despair, their poetry became a bitter *de profundis*. One of their spokesmen, E. A. Rheinhardt, seeking to describe the atmosphere in which they work, quotes these words of Suarès: "Despair is our natural condition. . . . We think but to recognize it, and we live only to escape it. In many respects, the measure of our despair is the measure of our worth, and the quality of our despair is the quality of our very selves." All these men have drawn their drink from

what Nietzsche calls the udders of sorrow, and they have poured their desperation into their poetry. And yet in many of them the grief is too passionate to be hopeless.

Through the sounds of mourning beat the shrill if confused summons to revolt. The history of literature has accustomed us to finding radicalism in technique accompanied by conservatism in ideas. In contemporary German poetry one discovers, on the contrary, extremism in form linked with revolutionary political and social thinking. The artist becomes apostle, preaching, with esoteric excitement, pacifism, internationalism, and Christian communism, in panting diction. These bold young men take unto themselves Shelley's pronouncement that "poets are the trumpets that sing to battle—poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." Yet as trumpets they are perhaps a little indistinct, and as legislators a little too rapturous. And so, too often, for all their charity, their poems are as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

No poet of the calibre of a Liliencron or a Rilke has emerged from this younger group. The lyric utterance of the present period is necessarily unbeautiful. It is nearer to the distortions of a Gothic gargoyle than to the gracious poise of arrested motion which one finds in an Attic vase. Yet if it burns with a smoky, sputtering, tortured flame, it has the virtues of authenticity. It is the cry of a generation for which, in the words of one of its members, "the certainties of yesterday are withered," and which carries its hungers down bleak, blind roads. These young men feel themselves very old, even if some of them believe that they are ushering in the

dawn. But one wonders whether their despairs and eccentricities, their furor and their ecstasy are not the symptoms of a stormy adolescence. One hears the voice of Shelleyan aspiration:

"Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth,"

sounding, however clouded and confused, in the ravaged rhapsodies, in the recondite lamentations of the German poets of our times.

PART I

Masters

Detlev von Liliencron

WINTER SCENE

Perched on his bough, a monster raven makes
the one strong note etched black upon the snow.
But no! a stooping stout old goody takes
her painful way, mumbling, stumbling and slow.
What a wind-reddened nose, for gracious sakes!
Her left arm in her apron—frost hurts so!—
in her right hand a garnished platter shakes,
and how that pickled herring makes a show!

ACHERONTIC CHILL

Now starlings nibble the red rowanberry,
and harvest viols summon lustiness;
oh, wait, soon autumn with her shears will harry
the forests till they stand in shorn distress;
then in the woods plucked penury will tarry,
through naked boughs a little stream will press
and drowsily drive toward my shore the ferry
that bears me over to frore silences.

AFTER PARTRIDGE SHOOTING

Hot, tired, and thirsty, burnt by a strong sun,
I turn into the inn I call my own.
Upon the wall I hang my cap and gun,
the water-pail my dog leaves dry as bone.
Bright falls the evening-glow athwart a tun,
where the young widow stands, as though of stone,
and sad,—her fleeting smile a furtive one;
soon the guests' going leaves us there alone.

SPHINX AMONG THE ROSES

Shaped of white stone, in the June garden lies
a Sphinx, most secret and most awful cat.
Like delicate banners two tossed roses rise
and fall, giving her paws their kiss and pat.
The monster remains dumb, her lips devise
only their old grimace, as when she sat
dumb before Rameses, proffering no replies.
In the still garden only sparrows chat.

EARLY SPRING AT THE WOODS' EDGE

In naked trees about me jackdaws shriek,
the woodpecker knocks on, busy and sly;
over the ferns, hither and yon, a streak
of lemon-yellow marks a butterfly.
A hawk swoops like an arrow, with poised beak,
sheering from the plow-handle toward the sky.
Heaven, the bud-sower, shows a laughing cheek,
and from the fields the Easter-psalms ring high.

DEEP LONGING

May's greeting, the first catkins,
I break you and I take you
To make my old hat fair.

May's greeting, the first catkins,
I broke you once and took you
For my love to wear.

STORM

The storm pressed his rude brow against the pane;
The dark black clouds drove by, blowing their rain
Like tatters of a giant funeral flag,
And swift as fever-fancies playing tag.

A sudden longing sent you, dumb with fear,
Into my arms to seek your shelter here.
Ah, it was sweet! A leaf, storm-driven, flew
Against my heart; yes, and it stayed there, too.

THE BIRCH TREE

We loved. I sat beside your bed to stare
At your dear mouth, weary with death's last pain.
Your wandering eyes besought me everywhere:
Do you hear scythes sweep softly through the grain?

And Pentecost was here. The eager city
Fled out of doors, Spring-hatted, gaily drest.
The loveliest day betrayed us without pity,
O day, be gracious to her fevered rest.

Beside your head, beside your feet were bending
Two green young birch-trees, shadowing the floor,
A message from the sacred life descending,
They brought a greeting at the dread, dark door.

I cut those green boughs for you yesterday
In that familiar place where we would stand
Spellbound so often, yet so wildly gay,
And where we sat so often, hand in hand.

There an old willow stands, that in bright weather
Secured us from the sun and envious eyes,
There all is still, and round about, the heather,
And on the broom poise trembling dragon-flies.

A chattering stream winds gently through that place,
The rye retires south toward kinder soil,
There Nature shadows her bowed, sunburnt face,
And rests, bent over, weary with her toil.

Do you recall the evening we were sitting,
Bound by a gathering storm, so silently
Beside our osier-bush, you spoke, fear flitting
Across your eyes: "If you deserted me?"

Look up, through screening boughs that droop behind
you,
Ah, I was true, each trusted what each said.
Silence comes cloud-borne, from the wastes, to find you,
The soft scythe whirrs, now sinks your dying head.

TIME

In the first languid dawning reigns
The morning-moon, clear ere she wanes.

The sky is washed with cooling blue,
The wind snips pearls from off the dew.

Peace trembles: violent with dooms,
Day, the vast sullen monster, looms,

Bellows and bites and makes things fly
And shows what living is thereby.

On his swift course the bright sun glows,
Now ruddy eve, now midnight goes.

In the first languid dawning reigns
The morning-moon, clear ere she wanes.

Time munches, munches, steadily,
Munching his way through eternity.

Arno Holz

PHANTASUS: III, 25

In sere wreaths
autumn is swaying.

Crimson leaves
flutter,
fall.

Mist
is gathering,
crows croak.

Yet once more,
wearily,
the sun is shining.

On the still lake,
upon the little bridge,
leaning over the old, crooked, moss-rotted, wooden rail-
ings

under the dark,
gigantic plane-trees' serpent-colored branches,
I stand and stare
into a mirrored Paradise.

PHANTASUS: IV, 4

Red roses
twine themselves about my dark lance.

Through fields of white lilies
my steed goes snorting.

From jade-green seas
virgins emerge,
slender, unveiled, with rushes in their hair.

I ride, a man of bronze.

Ever,
close before me,
flies the bird Phœnix
and sings.

Shall I . . . once more . . . found myself upon my
ruin?

Shall I . . . reconstruct . . . the World-Naught? . . .
Shall I . . . annul . . . the Whole that I wrought?

I . . . No!

The fat priests may snore peacefully.

I . . .
I shall not arise!

I shall sit
with my legs crossed under me,
thinking of this, thinking of that,
feel how the clouds travel through my brain, and mirror
myself
in my navel.

This is a bleeding ruby
in a naked belly of gold!

PHANTASUS: VI, 12

 Around a glowing red pillar of iron,
 high as heaven,
 stuck with razors and sharp shards of glass,
I am swung, up and down, slowly, upon invisible chains.

 Slowly, jerkingly, thoroly.

 I groan, sigh, gurgle, bellow: Hosannah!

 In seven times seventy eternities,
when the shards are shattered and the knives worn out,
 the pillars will be black;
 below
 in the round, stinking puddle about them,
my brains, my liver, my blood, the whole mash, will lie,
 coagulated,
 and I,
 “refined”,
 a clarified, glorified jar of Liebig extract,
 sobbing,
 with my last, remaining little knuckle,
 will knock at the door of Paradise!

PHANTASUS: VI, 14

I wish you were real!

From off your golden chair
from out your heaven of singing seraphim,
that turns ringwise about your great, green, mighty,
trembling, ether-billowed earth,

by the hair of your long, laughable Jews'-beard,
I would pull you down and dip you

in all the misery, in all the suffering, in the whole sauce!

There!! Guzzle!!
Burst your bowels!

PHANTASUS: VI, 20

For seven septillion years
I counted the milestones at the edge of the Milky Way.

There was no end to them.

For myriads of æons
I lost myself in the miracle of one sole, small dewdrop.

New ones were always disclosing themselves.

Then my heart trembled!

Blessedly
I stretched myself and became earth.

Now blackberries climb
over me,
on a swaying blackthorn twig
a robin twitters.

Out of my breast
leaps a joyful spring,
out of my skull
grow flowers.

PHANTASUS: VII, 3

In the ruddy forest of fixed stars that bleed to death
I whip my winged horse.

Forward!

Beyond tattered planetary systems, beyond frozen prime-
val suns,
beyond the wastes of night and nothingness,
shimmering, grow New Worlds—trillions of crocuses!

PHANTASUS: VII, 12

My springtime, a sobbing hunger,
my summer, a hot struggle —

what
will my autumn be?

A tardy golden sheaf?

a lake of mist?

Richard Dehmel

WELCOME

Do not come in any trailing dress!
but come running, till the sparks fly shining,
with both arms flung wide in readiness!
No soft steps are leading to my castle;
torn cliffs, rather; put off train and tassel,
brief the skirt that fits with love's designing!

Do not stand before the glass to stare!
In the night my woodland is forsaken,
and you are most lovely brave and bare,
with but pallid star-light on you gleaming;
far away a haughty stag is screaming,
and with cuckoo cries my wood is shaken.

How your ear burns! how your bodice flutters!
quick, undo these garments that foreshow you;
oh, your heart is happy now, and stutters!
Come, I'll carry you, you white, wild wonder,
as God made you! tear your gauds asunder!
and your bride-bed—the whole earth below you.

SONG BEFORE NIGHT

In the vast glow of sun at evening
shudders the sea; slow mounts the flood.
In the vast glow of sun at evening
my pulses with that splendor thud.
In the vast glow of sun at evening
with fiercer fires roars my blood:
still mounts the flood—
in the vast glow of sun at evening.

THE GREAT CAROUSEL

In heaven is a carousel,
that turns both day and night.
It whirls as though beneath a spell;
one cannot ever see it well,
for it is made of light.
My madcap, stay your flight!

Take heed, it whirs the stars anew
around the skyey sphere,
in speeding circles lost to view,
and music, music sounds thereto,
so fine, we scarcely hear;
only in dreams 'tis clear.

In dreams we hear it from the far
bright sky: a heavenly bell.
My madcap dreams of that lit car,
we turn together on a star;
and not too swift it whirls, but well,
our mighty carousel.

MOUNTAIN PSALM

The storm has loosed his serpents fiercely coiling.
Grasses and reeds in long whorls hiss and sigh,
and landwards swell the lifted waters, boiling;
the willows, silver-pale, uprooted, cry.
Climb up! Climb up! There where the fir-trees mutter,
on naked heights alone I would stand fast,
and on my distant home see shadows cast,
and hear the thunder-words the dark clouds utter.

Grey pilgrims over me, where do you go?
Oh, without staff or goal, could I but follow,
and shake into the storm like mist or snow
this measureless mad longing, vain and hollow!
Oh, home! How silverly your rivers rear,
and skyward smile between blue forests gleaming.
while from the magic wood of childhood's dreaming
motherly eyes and lips are beckoning clear.

Storm, do you weep? Memories, fade and vanish!
In city smoke a tired heart's muscles strain.
The millions who for peace and pleasure famish
cry million-tongued; you worm, what is your pain!
No more from breast to breast, lonely and quiet,
longing flows slowly, like a brook grown still;
a people groans for light now, wild and shrill,
and yet in selfish sorrow you can riot?

Do you see smoke, a threatening fist, arise
from forge and factory, o'er the forests pouring?
toil scorns your pure, pale dream, whose selfish eyes
look inward, the stern sweaty strife ignoring.
You toyed with longing in a pretty game,
dullard, with pity for your own pain glowing;
pour forth the strength that toward you has been flowing,
and you will lose the burden of your blame!

Bloody, above the pointed towers beaming,
a crown of thorns flames round the city's brow,
and like a palm-leaf from the sun's tree gleaming,
a golden fan makes the scared storm-clouds cow.
O heart of the world-city, O ye voices
of hungry millions feeding upon woes,
as calmly as the Saviour's life-blood flows,
so from your wrath love flows, and love rejoices!

The chalice of your sweat holds sacrament:
I see the cross of pain alive with flowers.
Storm, do you laugh?—In reeds the mists ferment,
firs creak, my cloak is tossing in the showers:
“Forsake your dream! Compassion, lift your sway!
Let not your powers sink, consumed by longing!
From your desire let potent deeds come thronging!
Lift, brain! Sick heart, be still! Up! And away!”

THE WORKINGMAN

We have a bed, we have a child,
my wife!

We have work to do,—you and I too,
we have wind and rain and a sun that's mild,
and all that we lack is a little thing,
to be as free as the birds on the wing!
Just time.

When we go through the fields on a Sabbath day,
my child,
and over the meadows everywhere
we see the swallows, gleaming and gay,
we can look as bright as birds of the air,
it is not raiment for which we pray:
Just time.

Just time! we scent stormwinds, wrathful and wild,
we folk.

Only a small eternity;
all that we lack, my wife, my child,
is what we make blossom and bear and be,
to feel as bold as the birds in the tree.
Just time!

THE HARP¹

Unquiet stand the pines in lofty rows,
The clouds roll on from east to west, unseeking;
Silent and hurried, nest-ward fly the crows,
Hollow from dusky boughs the wood is speaking,
And hollow sounds my step.

Here have I walked before this self-same hill,
Before I knew the storm of such desire,
You called primeval-voiced across the still,
My arms stretched toward the infinite, reached higher,
O giant stems around!

Through the wide-stretching space gray trunks are seen,
Hardly a stirring, hour on changing hour,
And sweeping through their coronets of green,
Presses, restrained, the urge of sonorous power,
As then.

And like an earth-god's lifted hand one seems,
Split to the shaping of five mighty fingers,
Gold to its spreading brown-gold roots it gleams,
High over all the rigid stems it lingers,
The old, the lonely.

¹ Translated by Leonora Speyer.

Through those five fingers whirls a stubborn fight,
Fingers that strain and clutch in high air swinging,
And through the tops convulsed on windy height,
They seem to tear with fervor at the ringing
Notes of a haunted harp.

And from the harp there sounds a heavenly tone,
A song spreads on, from east to west, unseeking,
The song that since my boyhood I have known,
Hollow from dusky boughs the wood is speaking,
Come, tempest, grant my prayer!

Long have I yearned another hand to take,
A hand that mated to my heart's desire,
And strained each finger till it seemed to break,
For none could clasp that searching hand entire!
Then to a fist I clenched it!

For I have battled, fervent, unafraid,
'Twixt God and beast, weaponed with every yearning,
And now I stand and view the journey made,
And in my soul one fervour still is burning
Toward all the world.

Come, storm of storms, shake now these rigid rows!
Primeval tumult, let me too be blown!
In huddled panic, nest-ward fly the crows.
Give me the strength to be alone,
O world!

THE SWIMMER

Saved! And he fondles the pebbly sand
for which he fought with the furious sea;
and the white foam still whips his hand.

He looks around at the sullen land;
it lies storm-wrapped as it always lay,
stark hill, firm lea.

Here nothing changes, from day to day.
And he looks back toward the furious sea. . .

SONG TO MY SON

About my father's house,—the gale,
my heart out in the night, a flail,
beats; thus I used to wake and quail
before tossed forests as a child.

My little son, oh, hear the storm
that roars about you, cradled, warm,
and through your dream—my words, wind-borne and
wild.

Once I too laughed in childish sleep,
my son, not waked by lightning's leap,
by thunder's bellow, south-wind's sweep;
till one grey night.

Through the dark forest storm-winds roar
as then, as when I heard them soar
and like my father's voice they stirred my fright.

Hear, how the bristling tree-tops speak
and bow their buds with windy shriek;
my son, above your cradle's creak
the mad storm laughs—oh, hear anew!
He never bowed himself in fear!
Through the blown boughs he rumbles—hear;
Be you! be you!

And if your father should, one day,
my son, for filial duty pray,
do not obey, do not obey:

hear how the storm brews Spring in green retreats!
Hear, round my father's house,—the gale;
my heart out in the night, a flail,
beats—

Max Dauthendey

DEEP IN THE NOSEGAY

Like a colored nosegay the evening heavens shine,
clouds are scarlet lupins—clover incarnadine,
and the green fields and trees engird it like a frieze.
And lightly swung above the golden sky
floats the moon's scythe, a silver dragon-fly.
But folk move slowly, sunken in the nosegay's flare,
like little beetles, drunken, caught in a petalled snare.

THE MOON IS A FIERY ROSE

The moon comes up as the dusk falls late,
over the castle, glowing and great,
gently loosing the earth as it goes.

The moon is like a fiery rose
my beloved lost by the garden-gate.

Against stone walls my shadow stands,
then follows me, like a Moorish slave.
I will send him back with my commands
to pick up the rose, and, swift and grave,
to bring it to her in his dark hands.

“WE WALK BY THE SEA”

We walk by the sea, deep in the sand,
with slow footfalls, hand in hand.
The sea hugely gives us chase,
and we grow smaller, pace by pace.
Till at last we become so small
we step into a conch and hide from all.
Here we rest like pearls, deep in its whorls,
growing always lovelier, just like pearls.

THE RAIN SEEMS POSSESSED

I hear the threshing rain
on pavement, thatch and pane.
The rain as though possessed
would make the world its feast.

I must lie close beside
my dear, and watch her, too,
for if her eyes are wide
then I can see the blue.

EVERY LEAF TENDS EARTHWARD

A mist hangs over the morning like snow,
it hurts the leaves on the birches so,
that they fall, yellow, and flutter, dumb,
and every leaf to the ground would come.

We walk behind the leaves wind-blown,
they fly away into the unknown.
I follow as blindly when you go by—
Oh, take me too when you come to die.

LOVE'S CALENDAR: MARCH

Upon the trees the March winds ride,
and clamor and cloud through the heavens stride;
now girls let idle dreams alone,
and would swing their hips where the dew is blown.
They would flee from the house as the high clouds flee,
as eager to bud as a growing tree;
and one who could look in their eyes would say
that in March he had had a glimpse of May.

LOVE'S CALENDAR: JULY

When I met you at shut of day,
your shoes in the cool moon's bars
passed bee-like beneath the stars.
The stars waxed large on high,
then loosed themselves from the sky,
and fell into the field like dust.
Proud trees with their heads upthrust
murmured their vatic charms;
a drowsy tree by the way
was catching stars in its arms.
When I met you at shut of day
the grain was warm as my blood;
peace rose in my heart like a flood,
the path was a path to keep,
I moved with the moon-filled hours,
and the bound sheaves, flecked with flowers,
lay like joy in a garnered heap.

LOVE'S CALENDAR: AUGUST

We walked beside the nimble brook
and kept its pace, so swift and strong;
the waving willows cast us a look
and the bluebells pleaded to come along.

But too hot was your heaving breast,
for blue flowers far too hot,
every bluebell stayed shut fast,
with cool eyes in that still spot,
and thought of you long after you had passed.

LOVE'S CALENDAR: NOVEMBER

The ravens stole the moons
away from the wall of night;
they have buried them all far down
in the meadow, out of sight.

All shining things they hide
deep in the soil and the sand;
the thievish ravens pried
my beloved's heart from my hand.

Now I must sit in the dark,
bewildered and full of pain;
When the cat's eyes show a spark
her heart must come home again.

Stefan George

¹ The peculiar punctuation of the originals is preserved in all the selections from this poet.

“COME TO THE PARK”

Come to the park now left for dead and see :
The shimmer of far shores whose smile is cool .
The startling blue of clouds whose clarity
Brightens the motley paths and every pool .

Take the deep yellow . and the velvet grey
Of birch and box . this wind remembers May .
The tardy roses not quite withered drip
Fragrance . then pluck and touch each petalled lip .

Nor pass these final asters' radiance .
The purple caught in tendrils of wild vine
And what remains of green life intertwine
Lightly above the autumnal countenance .

"WE WANDER UP AND DOWN"

We wander up and down in the rich glimmer
Of arching box-trees almost to the gate,
And see the almond-branches' silver shimmer
A second time in bloom shine through the grate.

We seek unshadowed benches where no voices
Of strangers ever put our peace to flight .
Our arms are linked in dream . and each rejoices
In the mild flowing of the languid light.

And we are thankful as the glamorous glisten
Is shed on us from peaks that stir with sound
Content to look and in the pauses listen
As the ripe fruit thuds gently to the ground.

“WHEN MY HOT LIPS”

When my hot lips are pressed against your own
I live within your being's core of breath
And then your body's clasping I undo
Still burning toward you loosen your embrace
And with bowed head I move away from you:
I go divining in your flesh my own—
In that dread silence which no mind can plumb
We sprang together from one kingly stem.

“YOU KNOW NOT WHO I AM”

You know not who I am . . . but this accept:
I have not yet by earthly word and deed
Made myself human . . . now the year is close
Wherein I shall determine my new form.
I change but my true selfhood I still keep
I shall not be as you: the choice is made.
So bring the votive branches and the wreaths
Violet-colored pale with asphodel
And bear before you the pure flame: farewell!
The step is taken on the farther path
And what I would be I became . At parting
There rests with you the gifts my kindred give:
My breath that quickens power and courage in you
My kiss that burns deep inward to your soul.

THE MISTAKING

In mourning the apostle night and day
Lay on the hill whence Christ had entered Heaven:
"Do you thus leave your faithful to despair?
Has this your splendor blinded you to earth?
Shall I not ever hear your voice again,
And kiss your garment's hem and kiss your feet?
I clamor for a sign . yet you are silent."
Then there approached a stranger: "Brother speak!
Upon your cheek there burns such agony
That it will singe me if I cannot quench it."
"Your comfort avails nothing . . leave the stricken!
I seek my Lord who has forgotten me."
The stranger vanished . . the apostle knelt
With a wild cry . for by heaven's radiance
Which hung about that place he was aware
That through blind pain and all too fragile hope
He had not seen: the Lord had come and gone.

**FROM OUT THE GLOW THE WRATH
OF HEAVEN SPOKE:**

My eyes are turned aside from this vile race . .
The spirit sickens! Now the deed is dead!
Those only who on golden triremes fled
Toward the holy places only those
Who play my harps and who within the temple
Do sacrifice . . and those who seek the way
With ardent arms outstretched into the evening
The steps of those alone I watch with favor—
And all the rest is night and nothingness.

“FROM NETHER DARK THE SEED”

From nether dark the seed spoke out of sight:
“Nothing but has its birth in damp and gloom . .
Do not condemn the dread environing womb
Be not afraid before the vasts of night—
This is the travail all must bear to be” . .
Now I behold the days when joyfully
Our mutual fruit shall laugh into the light.

"DARK BURNED THE SUNSET"

Dark burned the sunset of the world . . . the Lord
Walked once again unto the templed town
The poor and mocked who will destroy all this.
He knew : no mortared stone would ever stand
Unless the ground . the whole . be swept away.
The seekers for one goal fought one another :
Numberless hands were raised and numberless
Ponderous words fell where but One was needful.
Dark burned the sunset of the world . . . mirth flour-
ished
All looked toward the right—but He looked left.

Rainer Maria Rilke

SPANISH DANCER

As in one's hand a sulphur-match burns white
before it flames, and giddily unfurls
its thrusting tongues:—thus circling in the sight
of crowding watchers, hurried, hot and bright
her round dance spreads in white and widening whirls.

And suddenly it is sheer flame and flare.

Then with her glance she kindles her tossed hair
and with more daring artistry, leaps higher
and wheels her vesture in this passion of fire,
whence her bare arms, each like a startled snake,
stretch sinuously rattling and awake.

And then: as though the fire were strangling stuff,
she gathers it together,—flings it off
with one imperious gesture, her proud eyes
watching: where raging on the ground it lies,
and keeps on flaming, nor submits, a-spin.—
Yet certain and triumphant, with a sweet
and gracious smile, she lifts her perfect chin
and stamps it out with little furious feet.

THE CAROUSEL

JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG

A little while both roof and shadow turn
with the quick steeds, whose motley coats enchant,
all hailing from the land that knows no want,
whose distant end no childlike eyes discern.
And every champing horse is arrogant,
though some are hitched to coaches, it is true;
a red and wicked lion bounds there too,
and now and then a huge, white elephant.

Even a wild stag flies along the track,
as in the wood, but saddle he must wear,
and a small girl in blue perched on his back.

And on the ruddy lion rides a young
blonde boy, with small hot hand and quickened pant,
the while the lion shows his teeth and tongue.

And now and then a huge, white elephant.

And round and round on their swift steeds they tear,
and clear-eyed girls, who are quite grown, among
the other children ride embarrassed, swung
in forward flight, looking now here, now there—

And now and then a huge, white elephant.

And it goes on and hurries to a close,
circling and whirling with no end or aim.
A red, a green, a grey rides forth, and goes,
A small vague profile, fading as it came.
And sometimes a soft glance abruptly glows,
a dazzling spendthrift smile some child bestows
briefly upon this blind and breathless game.

QUAI DU ROSAIRE

BRUGES

These streets have such a tranquil, languid gait
(as convalescents, moving thoughtfully,
Wonder: is this the way it used to be?),
and those that reach the squares linger to wait

for one that passes with a single stride
across the waters the clear dusk has dyed,
wherein, as things grow mellowed and imperled,
the clearer shines a mirror-imaged world,
more real than things substantial ever were.

Has not this city vanished? Oh, look there,
(as if through some unfathomable law)
transposed, in those blank depths it lies, defined,
as though life there were of a wonted kind;
hugely the luminous gardens hang, enshrined,
and suddenly the dance coils there, behind
the lighted windows of the hostelries.

And overhead?—The silence, indolent,
leans, slowly crushing sweetness on her tongue:
grape upon fragrant grape, from luculent
clusters of chimes in the far heavens hung.

BLUE HYDRANGEAS

Like the last green, in crucibles of dyes,
these arid leaves are, rough and dull and old,
behind the clustered flowers, that do not hold
their blue, but catch a far blue, mirror-wise.

Vaguely reflected, all but wept away,
as though it might be lost if they should stir,
and as in time-worn pale blue note-paper
it melts to yellow, violet and grey ;

washed out like a child's apron, short and sheer,
no longer worn, removed from jeopardy :
one feels how brief a little life is, here.

Yet in one cluster the soft blue is seen
renewed, and one beholds, all breathlessly,
a touching blue rejoicing in the green.

AUTUMN

The leaves are falling, falling as though strewed
from heaven's gardens that are withering;
negation gestured in their downward flight.

The heavy earth falls also, through the night,
alone of all the stars, toward solitude.

Thus we are falling: This hands falls. And see:
how the same frailty is betrayed by all.

Yet there is One who holds all things that fall
in His great hands, tender ineffably.

THE OLD WOMAN

White-faced friends in the midst of today
laugh and listen and plan for the morrow;
apart are the folk who sedately weigh
slowly each trouble and minor sorrow—

always the Why and the When and the How,
and one hears them say: I really believe;—
but she sits there, whom they cannot deceive,
thinking behind her lace-capped brow

how foolish they are, one and all.
And her dropping chin leans, sharp and small,
on the coral, white to match her shawl
and her pale forehead's ivory tones.

But sometimes, when sudden laughter rings,
from under her lifted lids she brings
two alert looks, displaying these hard things
as when one presses a chest's secret springs
and shows old heirlooms of amazing stones.

"THE MONARCHS OF THE WORLD"

The monarchs of the world are old
and of their heirs will be deflowered.
Their sons as boys lean death devoured,
and their pale daughters early dowered
force with frail crowns they could not hold.
The mob breaks these to minted gold,
the master of the times has rolled
the growling metal thinned by fire
into machines at his desire,
but fortune is not in his hire.
The ore is homesick. It is burning
to leave the coins and wheels, whose hollow
lessons teach it a life so meagre;
from vaults and mills to be returning
to veins that it was wont to follow,
only for opening mountains eager,
that close upon it their dark doors.

PIETÀ

So once more, Jesus, I behold your feet,
feet that long since my pitiful hands laid bare,
to wash them,—then they seemed a boy's, I thought;
how they stood tangled in my covering hair,
like a white wild thing in the briers caught.

For the first time, this night of love, your sweet
and never-cherished limbs are mine to know.
I never warmed them with my body's heat,—
now I may only watch them, thus brought low.

But look, your hands, your wasted hands, are torn:
Beloved, not by me, with passion's thorn.
Your heart is open to the passerby:
none should have entered there, save only I.

Now you are tired, your mouth, that tired flower,
has no desire for my mouth of woe.—
When, Jesus, Jesus, O when was our hour?
Strangely together to our doom we go.

"YOU, NEIGHBOR GOD"

You, neighbor God, if sometimes in the night
I rouse you with loud knocks, I seek you only
because I know you are alone and lonely,
because your scarce heard breathing seems so slight.
And should you need a drink, there's none to hear—
your groping finds no cup—the long hours darken.
Give but a little sign. Be sure I hearken
always. I am so near.

Between us stands a wall so mere, so fine,
so casual, that it might take
simply a call from your lips or from mine—
and it would break
all noiselessly away.

Your images between us stand like clay.

And every image hides you like a name.
And if the light in me is made to burn,
whereby my depths your instant self discern,
the brilliance spends itself upon their frame.

And then my senses, that so soon grow lame,
apart from you are exiles, hopeless of return.

"BE NOT AFRAID, GOD"

Be not afraid, God. They say: mine,
of all things that permit it patiently.
They are like wind, that strokes the skyey boughs
and says: *my tree*.

They hardly see
how all you touch, your hand with glow endows,—
so that to grasp the mere extremity
of things with such a burning radiance fringed, is to be
singed.

They will say: mine, as one might say,
in speech with peasants, the prince is his friend,
the prince being great—and very far away.
They call their strange walls: mine, nor comprehend
who is their dwelling's lord, whom they gainsay.
They still say: mine,—possessive, every one,
though all things close as they draw near to them,
as a dull clown in a paste diadem
claims that he owns the lightnings and the sun.
And thus they say: my life, my property,
my wife, my child, but know with certainty
that all things: wife and child and life and lands
are alien forms, against which, with blind hands,
groping, they knock, where none can penetrate.
Yet those who have this surety are the great
who long for eyes. The rest, incredulous,

will not believe their wandering is thus
a walking in the void, to naught attached,
that, from their putative possessions snatched,
unrecognized by all that they named: ours,
they can own wives no more than they own flowers,
whose life is alien and apart from man.

God, do not fall from your poised, perfect place.
Even he who loves you and who knows your face
in darkness, when he trembles like a light
before your breath,—he does not own you quite.
And if at night one holds you, closely pressed,
so that you are his prayer's denizen:

You are the guest
who soon goes on again.

Who can retain you, God? You are your own,
disturbed by no possessor, rash or rude,
like the unripened wine, untouched, unknown,
and growing sweeter in its solitude.

“WHAT WILL YOU DO, GOD?”

What will you do, God, when I die?
I am your jar (if cracked, I lie?)
Your well-spring (if the well go dry?)
I am your craft, your vesture, I,
you lose your purport, losing me.

When I go, your cold house will be
empty of words that made it sweet.
I am the sandals your bare feet
will seek and long for, wearily.

Your cloak will fall from aching bones.
Your glance, that my warm cheeks have cheered
as with a cushion, long endeared,
will wonder at a loss so weird,
and when the sun has disappeared,
lie in the lap of alien stones.

What will you do, God? I'm afear'd.

"PUT OUT MY EYES"

Put out my eyes: and I shall see you, too,
seal up my ears: and I shall hear you still,
and without feet I yet can go to you,
and with no mouth, adjure you an I will.
Break off my arms, and I shall hold you fast
even with my heart, as though it were a hand;
arrest my heart, my brain to throb is sworn,
and if into my brain you fling a brand,
yet on my very blood you will be borne.

“WE ARE ALL WORKMEN”

We are all workmen: prentice, journeyman,
or master,—building you, you lofty nave.
Sometimes an earnest traveler comes to scan
our labor, whose help is a wind to fan
our souls, as sunlight on the architrave.

Upon the rocking scaffolding we rise,
the hammers in our hands swing heavily,
until a gracious hour hither flies,
whose radiance is wonderful and wise,
hailing from you as wind hails from the sea.

Then many hammers echo south and north,
and on the heights their throb is like a blast.
Only with dusk we yield you up at last:
And see your shaping contours shadowed forth.

God, you are vast.

Alfred Mombert

**“ON THE STAIRS LEADING TO MY
MARBLE HALLS”**

On the stairs leading to my marble halls,
in the moonlight

I stand, erect.

Far below, in the thin blue mountain-lake,

Death is bathing,

the miscarried child of an unripe world.

The wretched creature is two feet high.

He wants to cleanse himself secretly

in my beloved, faithful waters.

Every worm in my kingdom

is more radiant and is more blessed

than that creature, below there.

"IN THE TEMPLE'S MIDST"

In the temple's midst a bronze vase is standing,
mirrored in the ceiling's polished metal.

It holds a sea.

Above it arches the Orion-Heaven
of the blue roof.

And on the sill of the ever open door
stand day and night in soft-voiced dialogue:
united in a twilight of cool gold.

Here in silence I will sit and think.

I have gathered round me all the things
of life, they radiate.

And I have spread above them my vast wings;
I, the possessing Dream-Colossus.

“PROJECT FOR A NEW WORLD”

Project for a new world:

A single, distant, vast expanse of snow,
and in its midst a sheer, huge citadel
in whose glass tower shall dwell
a woman, with a glory of flaming hair
that shines down through the crystal panes
over the snow, across the world.

This can remain forever.

But once in each eternity

a man, high as a cliff, comes stamping
from the world's end

—with heavy tread—tramping, tramping,
tramping into the tower,

and then, above, the shutters close,

locked by large and lovely hands:

and through these hours a vast darkness flutters
above the world, only one thin gleam shows
through a narrow crevice of the shutters.—

And high over all, to make one's slow blood freeze,
I hang, like a lonely cosmic tear,
brooding upon the eternities.

**“FROM THE CREATOR’S THRONE GOD
FELL”**

From the Creator’s throne God fell
into the thunderous hall where dwell
life and love.

He sits where torches shine
and drinks his ruddy wine,
where roistering mates together
boast of women and wild sea-weather.
Mountainous clouds are the old moon’s neighbors
as he rolls through night’s star-crested sea,
and the Lord’s great labors
are crowned consummately.

DEMON

I stumbled upon the imperial crown of Assyria,
as I wandered through the wastes of night
to my friend: Ishtar.
In starlight sat
a mourner under a fig-tree.

I spoke: If you desire it,
I shall cast a spell over the crown.
I shall raise it out of the dust,
and the realm of Assyria will bloom anew.

He spoke: I do not mourn
the ruin of the realm.
I mourn, that it once was,
and therefore will be, forever,
I mourn over all Being.

Then I bade him follow me
to my friend: Ishtar,
who is mighty over the Unborn.
Yet then he was struck dumb, and paled.

Christian Morgenstern

CLOUD FANTASIES: I

A black enormous cat
Glides across the heavens.
Sometimes
She angrily humps her back.
Then again
She stretches herself,
Alert,
Waiting to leap.
Does she believe the sun,
That far to westwards
Slowly steals away,
To be a motley bird?
A crimson humming-bird,
Or perhaps
A gleaming parakeet?
Lustfully she stretches herself
Further and further,
And a gleam of phosphor
Darts
Over the dark fur
Of the palpitant, covetous cat.

MOON TABLEAUX: IV

A boomerang flies through the evening clouds,
A golden-yellow boomerang.
And I think to myself: Hullo!
An Australian blackfellow angel
Must have hurled that
Out of the Happy Hunting-Grounds—
Perhaps inadvertently?
The poor blackfellow!
In the end a cherub prevents him
From climbing the heavenly fence
So that he may get his weapon
Back again . . .
Oh, darling cherub,
I beg you, for the blackfellow's sake,
Consider:
It is such a beautiful,
Precious,
Golden-yellow boomerang!

MOONRISE

In the forest tree-tops,
whose ghosts,
black and rigid,
fill the fawn-colored twilight sky,
hangs a great,
gleaming soap-bubble.

Slowly it loses itself
from the branches
and floats up
into the ether.

Below in the thicket
lies Pan,
in his mouth
a long reed,
whereon the crusted foam
of the neighboring pool
still glistens.

He blew bubbles,
the merry god:
but nearly all
burst maliciously.
Only one
behaved valiantly
and flew up
above the tree-tops.

Christian Morgenstern

There it rides shimmering,
borne by the wind,
across the land.
Ever higher mounts
the fragile ball.

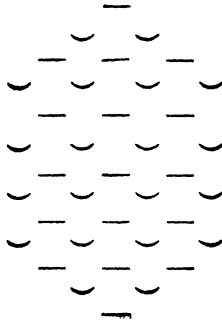
But Pan
with thumping heart-beats—
with caught breath—
gazes after it.

"ON THE STAIRCASE"

On the staircase my two ears are sitting,
like two kittens, for their milk impatient . . .
On the staircase sits my heart, attending,
like a ghostling, chin in hand, and listens.

But there comes no carrier with the letters.
Deaf and spiritless, within my chamber
I lie still. I want none of them with me.
Not the rosy kittens, not the ghostling.

NIGHT SONG OF THE FISH



THE WOODEN FENCE

Now once there was a wooden fence,
with gaps to peek through, hence and thence.

An architect who looked thereon
stood there one night, the fence to con—

and took the gaps between the boards
to build a mansion fit for lords.

The fence stood stupid and dumbfounded,
its boards by naught at all surrounded,

a hideous and vulgar sight.
The senate then suppressed it quite.

The architect, though, ran away
To Afri- or Americay.

“BLACK AS A NUN”

Black as a nun, with her white-wimpled tire
about your owl's face, are you, winter day,
with your snow-covered roof and ledge and spire.

And your vague eyes, that are such deathly grey,
regard me with a dull, cold, pallid fire
and question me: what of your hopes, now, say! . . .

THE BIRD OF SADNESS

A little black bird flies over the world,
its song bears death's own sorrow. . .
Who hears it, heeds nothing more he hears,
who hears it does himself mortal harm,
he never again looks sunward.

Each dark midnight, each dread midnight
it rests its wings on the finger of death.
He strokes it softly and tells it low:
"Fly, my little bird! Fly, my little bird!"
And again it flies fluting over the world.

"O WORLD, LET ME BEHOLD"

O world, let me behold your selfhood's core . .
Let me press slowly past your sensual rays . .

Even as a house is lighted more and more
until it brims with sunlight's golden blaze—
a house, which roof and walls to skyey light
in sacrificial radiance should upraise—
so as to stand fulfilled and burning-bright,
a ghostly structure luminously clear,
shining as a most radiant monstrance might:

Even so would my stern walls be offered here,
that your full being in my own be poured,
that my full being yours should so ensphere
that self with self would join in pure accord.

NECESSITY

(—and Necessity, too, is but a garment)

Necessity is like a gigantic mantle,
thrown round God's eternal body
by our need—

yet:

it does not reach far enough,
either above, or below:
The soles of God's feet
are visible beneath it,
and above rises, inaccessibly free,
His head.

Necessity is only the mantle, which
we draw about ourselves, the mortal need
whereunto we are driven by our own vision,
and turn from our own selves—
for the nakedness of the mystery
brings, like lightning,
death.

Yet underneath, our soles, unseen,
and always the crown of our heads, unseen, these
no mantle can enfold.

There we are—
free.

FIRST SNOW

From a grey background, silverly,
steps a slim doe
into the wood that winter wrought anew
and step by step tests cautiously
the clean, the cool, the freshly-fallen snow.

And, oh, most exquisite form, I think of You.

Else Lasker-Schüler

RECONCILIATION

(TO MY MOTHER)

A great star will fall into my lap. . .
We would hold vigil tonight,

Praying in languages
That are carven like harps.

We would be reconciled tonight—
So fully God overwhelms us.

Our hearts are only children,
Eager for weary-sweet slumber.

And our lips would kiss each other,
Why are you fearful?

Does not your heart border upon mine—
Your blood always dyes my cheeks red.

We would be reconciled tonight,
If we clasp each other, we shall not perish.

A great star will fall into my lap.

PALM SONG

Oh, my sweetly beloved, your countenance is my palm-
garden,

Your eyes are shimmering Niles,
Languidly girdling my dance.

In your countenance bewitched
Are all the imaginings of my blood,
All the nights that mirrored themselves in me.

When your lips open
My beatitudes are bewrayed.

Always this throbbing toward you—
And already my soul has been offered up.

You must kiss me hotly,
Golden plaything of my heart;
We shall hide ourselves in heaven,
Oh, my sweetly beloved.

END OF THE WORLD

There is a weeping in the world,
As though the dear God had met his doom,
And the leaden shadow here unfurled
Is heavy as a tomb.

Come, let us hide, as we have hid so often. . .
Life in all hearts is lying
As in a coffin.

Dear! we must kiss deeply, you and I—
The world throbs with a longing
Whereby we too must die.

MY LOVE SONG

(TO SASHA, THE HEAVENLY PRINCE)

Upon your cheeks lie
Golden pigeons.

But your heart is a whirlwind,
Your blood sweeps, like my blood—

Sweetly
Past the raspberry bushes.

Oh, I think of you—
Ask of the night.

None can play with your hands
So deliciously,

Building castles, as I do
Of the ring-finger;

Strongholds with high towers!
Then we become pirates.

Always when you are with me
I am rich.

You take me to you so closely
That I see your heart pulse like a star.

Your bowels
Are jewelled lizards.

You are all of gold—
Everyone is breathless.

SPHINX

She sits upon my bed at dusk, unsought,
And makes my soul obedient to her will,
And in the twilight, still as dreams are still,
Her pupils narrow to bright threads that thrill
About the sensuous windings of her thought.

And on the neighboring couch, spread crepitant,
The pointed-patterned, pale narcissus fling
Their hands toward the pillow, where yet cling
His kisses, and the dreams thence blossoming,—
On the white beds a sweet and swooning scent.

The smiling moonwoman dips in cloudy swells,
And my wan, suffering psyches know new power,
Finding their strength in conflict's tortured hour.

TO YOU

I weep
That at your kiss I feel
Nothing,
And I must sink into emptiness.
A thousand chasms reveal
No depth,
No void like this.
I wonder, in night's narrowest dark,
How I might tell you, very low,
Yet ever my courage fails.
I would a wind came out of the south
To bear it to you, so
That it would not sound cold to you,
But touch your soul, as warm words do,
And flow, scarce heeded, through your blood.

Franz Werfel

THE MAN IN THE MIRROR

*Good Heaven, it is not I who stares out of the glass,
That hairy-chested man, unshaven, grave and crass.*

 This morning was so blue,
 The sky was just like new,
And so nurse took me out to play upon the grass.

My little sailor-suit had not yet flown away
Up to the attic trunk where it is locked to stay.
 Just now laid aside,
 Collar drooping, wide,
Drowsy, it hangs against the door as it hangs every day.

Was I not in the kitchen when at four o'clock
The wintry smell of coffee wreathed a voluble tick-tock,
 I looked so shy and sweet,
 Just come, on tingling feet,
From the skating-pond with brother where I'd strutted
 like a cock.

Today again old nurse put fear into my heart,
Fear of the watchman Kakitz who stands in the park,
 apart.
 Often of wretched nights
 When wind blows out the lights
I hear this devil limp along through darkness and depart.

The good old woman, but why won't she come?
My head is heavy with sleep, my body numb.

 If she would just come in
 And take with her the thin
Small light that overhead keeps up its steady hum.

But no still tread is heard, softened by eventide,
And Babi does not come and take the light outside.

Just that stout man stands there
 With his helpless stare
Till he runs from the mirror, swiftly, terrified.

THE DIVINE DOOR-KEEPER

When as a boy I passed you, huge and grave,
You filled the doorway with your infinite height,
Your cocked hat put heraldic stars to flight,
Your beard was majesty, man with the stave!

And did I, being a child then, misbehave,
Embroidered greybeard, you came in at night,
Weaving with my wild dreams your gentle might,
As I beheld my peaked face in my grave.

Your image, Bible-God, before me rears!
Your patriarch's beard, as in my childish dreams,
Like waves upon your golden breast appears.

The gay galloon makes music to my ears,
And I am soothed by kind and kingly beams
From your white mantle, swung between the spheres.

HEAVENLY FATHER AT EVENING

When was my first beginning,
When will my labors be past,
Children, when shall I be winning
To the end, to rest at last?

When, shy and soft and quaking,
Your bedtime voices sue,
Though your foolish hearts be aching,
Children, I envy you.

There is one who heeds your weeping,
Friends are not far to seek,
Your mother's hand, while you are sleeping,
Is quietly stroking your cheek.

And if you are grown-up people,
You hold out your arms, to the sweet
Remembrance of childhood—to steeple
And garden and house and street.

I had no rooms to skip through,
No playground to which to come,
The memories I could trip through
Are eternal and old and dumb.

I never stepped, unbounded,
Into the path of fate,
To whom shall I pray, being wounded,
By thousands of planets confounded,
For whom shall my helplessness wait?

Now earth's little lights are dying,
You lie huddled, by slumber ensphered,
Now, alone, I am crying
In my long, long white beard.

MOON SONG OF A GIRL

(FOR MY SISTER HANNA)

Through hours of a brittle transparence,
I lie, with hair loosed to the night.
The moon with her lingering laughter
Spills slowly her unholy light.

And now as the death-bearing brightness
Is feeling my brow and my eyes,
I melt, I become as a billow,
Whose crest is sucked back in its rise.

My mother is breathing there near me,
And father is restless in sleep.
While I, over all my beloved,
My terror-filled watch must keep.

Through rooms that are rank, archangels
Are stirring: appalling, divine.
I hear an unquieted crying:
A child, and it is not mine.

The nightlamp by thousands of bedsides
Of anguish, the moon appears.
I long to silence the sobbing,
But these are my own weak tears.

The things in the room are abandoned,
The clothes, and the chair, and the chest. . . .
I fumble to clutch at distance,
To be but a hand bearing rest!

The chilled ones should be my companions,
The freezing, my arms would immure!
I feel that the rich and the many
Are children to me, and so poor!

For all I must care, since all suffer,
My sleep is glassy, it shakes. . . .
I hear how each one in the morning
Breathes painfully as he awakes.

The broken trees sway in the window,
Wide skies to the winds are unfurled.
I cover with my own blanket
Each helpless, shivering world.

AN OLD WOMAN PASSES

An old woman passes like a rotund tower
Down the street, stormed by a leafy shower.
Soon she disappears, and panting, trots
Where black mists in gusty nooks are blowing.
Now she'll find a doorway, and be going
Slowly up the creaking steps, where glowing
Sluggish pools of lamplight lie in blots.

Now she goes into her room: no stir,
No one takes her jacket off for her.
Shaking hands and legs are cold as stone.
Fluttering, weary, she begins to putter
With her saved-up victuals and stale butter,
While the fire lifts its feeble mutter.
With her body she remains alone.

She forgets, while gulping down her buns,
That in her old frame there once grew—sons.
(Ah, the joy in slippers to be shod.)
Now her own with strangers she is sharing,
She forgot the cry when she was bearing,
Rarely, in a press of people faring,
A man calls her "mother" with a nod.

Think of her, oh, man, and think how we
In this world remain a prodigy,
Since we humans into time have hurled!

How in the Unknown we dangle, gasping,
Looming shadows all about us grasping
Soul and body, crushed in their strange clasping.
This world cannot be the only world.

When she glides, so grizzled, through the room,
Oh, perhaps she feels it in the gloom.
Sight is fading in her dim old eyes.
Yes, she feels herself in all things, growing,
On her groaning knees she sinks down, glowing,
As in a lamp's little flicker showing
The vast face of God begins to rise.

THE WIDOW AT THE BED OF HER
SON

Holding my flickering candle,
I visit your dream, my child,
You sleep with the face of amazement,
But your breath comes viewless and mild.

It brought you no bitter moment
That you looked at me with a lour,
That you left me alone with my grieving
At midnight's anxious hour.

And yet! I will rouse you to courage
By night, and to life at the flood,
Your urge, your powerful striving
Runs through my shadow like blood.

Oh, son! Your drinking, your eating
Is food for your mother, I know.
Your cups as they circle are stirring
My circle of years in its flow.

And when I am sitting and stitching,
This life is uplifted and flies
To you, and my perishing vision
Fades to be flame in your eyes.

When I carried you with trembling
In the known and yet sacred womb,
You gave pain through the days that shaped you,
And grew great in the narrow gloom.

And, as you left my body
For the home and the hearth and the blue,
And as in me you were kindled,
So I am quenched in you.

My life is a self-outpouring
Into your rounded light,
And aching, I lavish upon you
My duty that is your right.

Soon shall I be naught but your laughter,
Naught but the word on your breath.
Ah, let me guard your sleeping,
My child, my existence, my death.

FOR I AM YET A CHILD

O Master, rend Thou me!
For I am yet a child.
And still I dare to sing,
And to name Thee,
And say of everything:
We are!

My lips are parted, now,
Before Thou hadst me taste thy bitter pain.
My limbs are sound, I know not how
The greybeard rusts with age's stain,
I never clutched the bed-posts with the strain
Of women in their heavy hour.

I never struggled through the weary night
Like cabbies' nags, those noble brutes,
Who long since fled the world through which they go!
(From magical shattering footsteps, to and fro,
Of passing women, from all sounds of delight.)
I never trudged through endless vistas like four-footed
mutes.

I never was a sailor with oil lacking,
With the thousand waters rising to mock the sun,
When signal-shots were cracking,
When rockets shook, aflame,
I never knelt to Thee, Thy anguished one,
O Master, seeking Thee in a final prayer.

I never was a child, maimed in the factory
Of these too aching times: scarred flesh, and bones awry,
I never starved in a vile shelter, I
Know not how mothers put out their eyes lest they see,
Nor know, when empresses nod, the agony.
All you who die, I know not how you die!

Do I then know the lamp, do I know the hood,
The air, the moon, the autumn, and all the flutter
Of yeasty winds that spume and sputter?
Do I know a face, evil or good?
Do I know the proud false words that girls can mutter?
Do I know how flattery brings the ache of the rood?

But Thou, O Master, descended, even for me,
With torments thousandfold Thy limbs have quivered,
With every woman hast Thou been delivered,
And died in dung, in paper-scrap outflung,
In circus seals hast Thou been cursed and with their
bodies shivered,
And cavaliers, taking a whore, took Thee.

O Master, rend Thou me!
What is this stolid, pitiable pleasure?
I am not worthy of Thy wound's red treasure.
Grace me with martyrdom, agony on agony!
The death of the whole world my heart can measure.
O Master, rend Thou me!

Until in every worn-out rag I die,
Until in every cat and jade I perish,

As a soldier, sicken under the desert's eye,
Until, oh, sinner that I am, the sacrament upon my
tongue most bitterly shall lie,
Until upon the awful bed my bitten body cry,
Stretched toward the form that I, the scorned, must
cherish.

When I am strewn on all the winds, an airy avatar,
In all things dwelling, yea, even in smoke,
Then, God, blaze from Thy briers as a star!
(I am Thy child.)
Thou also, Word, burst forth, which I as portent spoke,
Pour thyself deathless through all things: We are!!

NOW I AM FILLED WITH DEATH

Once I understood the little fire,
When I was a smith, half blind with smoke of dreams,
Once too I understood the little streams,
When I was a rivergod,
Dipped in the sunny midday mire.

The foreign singer once I understood,
And in the time of leaves—the mad beggar and his
woman,—

The hideous lovely English governesses
In their corners like dry briers in the winter wood,
These too I understood,
When I was human.

Now there bides in me
Such a pillar of pain,
A death, rigidity, forgetting and forgot,
I do not know at all what you may be.
The world is salt, ice, brass,
The world is the wife of Lot.
It is a pillar, since it looked back again
At my Sodom and Gomorrah.

BALLAD OF THE FOLLOWERS

I go, slowly vanishing, off through the snow.
Are there hedges or sedge? I know not; I know,
Blowing bleak through the darkness, only the snow.

Alone through the blank dreary streets I must stride.
Alone? But I hear them on every side:
Behind and before and around me they glide.

Lurching before me, a dull drunken man
Who mumbles and stumbles along as he can,
Or is it an ailing, a perishing man?

To my right, to my left, dance a quick twinkling pair,
Two dogs, hardly glimpsed through the glimmering air,
But I feel now a leap, now the touch of rough hair.

And behind, is that creature a nag gone astray,
Who broke from his load and ran, panting, away?
Now he follows me with a long, weary neigh.

When I halt in my steps where the slow flakes slide,
Then all of my quiet companions bide,
Behind me, before me, and still on each side.

The sick man halts, he is choked with pain,
The dogs crouch close and there they remain.
I feel the hot breath of the horse like rain.

And again I take up my weary tramp,
And they gnash and they glide by my side in the damp,
Steady behind me, the four-footed stamp.

Snow-streets! Solitude! Only our tread.
The sick man may not go to his bed.
For the nag no stall, for the dogs no bread.

Through the long streets whose dim nooks never vaunted
Dawn, I must grope through the snowstorm undaunted.
Alone, but forever thing-ridden, brute-haunted.

PART II

The Younger Group.

Adolf von Hatzfeld

THE HUNT

The hunt is up. The hue and cry grows red.
The woods are withering, stiff in gold brocade.
Throbbing with our mad mood,
as though we had snuffed blood, and sought its trace,
we have burst forth into the chase.

The hunt is up. The hue and cry burns red.
We ride a boar to death.

We are the masters. We in our crimson coats,
with our white-banded, shining boots.

The boar has his few minutes yet to live,
by but the grace we give
once more the creature may immerse himself in sun,
till, for our wanton fun,
for the wild game of the hounds,
he knows his deathly wounds,
and in his panic pain
at last he lays his listless body down.

The hunt is run. The red haloo has faded into dun.
And a brown death descends on the wood's brown.
But one cannot forget: the shuddering sweat
that broke out of the creature's pallid fear,
that was your own death-sweat.

The creature's blood wherewith the ground was smeared,
the foam of his fierce mood,

that was your blood.

The creature's final moment, when the brood
of dogs was at his throat, biting his breath,
that was your death.

You too are but the plaything demons use.

They toss your sick heart and your dizzy brain.

They mock your fear, your piteous prayers refuse,
till, for their wanton fun,
in panic pain

at last you lay your listless body down.

The hunt was run. The red haloo had veiled itself in
dun.

The brown wood lay in agony begun.

Max Brod

GOLDFISH ON THE WRITING DESK

In front of our mouths, wherever we swim
There is always glass, and something dim,
Something foreign and fathomless
Like a far storm's shuddering heaviness.

There are little green leaves about us here,
Through seaweed forests our way we steer
Among delicate threads and slime and light.
Then we are still, not grasping quite
The voice of home, sounding out of sight.

A little push and there is the wall,
We trip, we tremble, prisoners all,—
And again the strange power, that never breaks in,
Ruling through walls so firm, so thin.

O sorrowful circling in this small room;
Iridescent-eyed, we stare at our doom.
Pale colors before us towering bloom,
The vast paper, a roaring sound.
Perplexing us, from the dim profound.

Now toward us, through the turbid veil,
Across the inkwell bends something pale,
It dazzles, close to our dwelling-place,—
The huge, sorrowful human face.

It lies as the pale moon lies on the sea,
But in its whiteness, heavy and slow,
Flickering, blind with captivity,
Moving as fish move, restlessly,
The two dark eyes go to and fro.

Iwan Goll

CARAVAN OF LONGING

Our far-stretching caravan of longing
Never finds an oasis of nymphs and shadows!
Love sings us, birds of anguish
Bite forever, tearing our hearts out.
Ah, we know of cool winds and waters:
Everywhere might Elysium be!
But we wander, we wander ever in longing!
Somewhere a man leaps from a window
To snatch a star, and perishes for it,
Someone searches in the panopticon
For his waxen dream and loves it—
But each parching heart is a Land of Fire.
Ah, were the floods of Nile and Niagara
To overwhelm us, we would cry with more terrible thirst!

Albert Ehrenstein

HOME-COMING

Where are your ancient waves, O river,
And where are your rounded leaves,
You acacia trees of my youth?
And where is the fresh snow of perished winters?

I turn homewards and do not find home,
The houses wear different clothes,
Shamelessly they have gathered into unrecognizable
 streets,
The girls with braided hair whom I loved most shyly
Are women with children.

Albert Ehrenstein

HOMER

I sang the songs of red revenge,
And I sang the stillness of wood-shadowed waters,
But no one companioned me;
Rigid, lonely,
As the locust sings to itself,
To myself I sang my song.
Now my steps vanish, grown faint
In the sands of lassitude.
For weariness my eyes are failing me,
I am tired of comfortless fords,
Of sea-crossing, of girls, of streets,
At the gulf's edge I do not remember
The shields and the spears.
Blown upon by birches,
By winds over-shadowed,
I fall asleep to the sound of a harp
Whose music
Joyfully drips from under another's fingers.
I do not stir,
For all thoughts and all acts
Trouble the limpid eyes of the world.

1915

Wilhelm Klemm

REFLECTIONS

Trees in silent green stand satiate.
And heaven darkens to a forgotten grey.
The endlessness of the grass
Triumphs in a thousand little blades.

What did we really love best?
The virtues have long since paled beneath the shrugged
 shoulders
Of the understanding. Fame is so frail,
It frees no one. Wisdom drowns
In melancholy. Memories perish,
Even the loveliest. Even of the freedom
From pain. Strange and obscure,
Dies the far murmur of things perceived.
A mysterious love remains,
Half woman, half star,
Which trembles in ineffable delicacy over the darkling
 heart
Like a drop of eternity,

While winter again moves coolly through the land,
And heaven grows lonelier over the treetops,
And the deep-breathing breast turns westward
Where evening goes home, a tardy dreamer.

Albert Ehrenstein

SUFFERING

How am I hitched
To the coal-wagon of my mourning!
Loathsome as a spider
Time creeps over me.
My hair falls out,
My head greys, like a field
Where the last reaper
Swings his sickle.
Sleep darkens about my limbs.
Already in dreams I have died,
Grass sprang out of my skull,
My head was of black earth.

Georg Trakl**AMEN**

Decayed things gliding through the moldering room;
Shadows on yellow hangings; in dark mirrors
Arches the ivory sorrow of our hands.

Brown pearls run through perished fingers.
In the stillness
An angel opens his blue popped eyes.

Blue, too, is the evening;
The hour of our death, Azrael's shadow,
That darkens a small brown garden.

Armin T. Wegner

THE HEAD

My head lies vacant upon the pillow at night.
It rests like a lonesome house, forlorn, in sleep.
But within, along dark streets, the senses creep,
Knowing all pain, fathoming all delight.

Softly they glide, on secret soles arisen,
In drowsy courtyards the dogs clamor and cower,
But my body lies entombed in a sunken prison,
My ear no longer hears the dark call of the hour.

Only the senses, the naked senses stare
Greeditly after their feast, over bolster and chair
Body and soul shamelessly stretching, reclined.

Rogues and harlots that toy with things holy and rare,
That stumble and tumble over the murky stair—
Dance through the nocturnal brothel of my mind.

Iwan Goll

ETERNAL SHIPWRECK

Oh, nights, carry us far, you purple ships
With velvet wings for sails,
Bear us across to the gentle gulf of joy.
We believe Sinbad gladly, that friend and king of dreams,
We would sob to his viols.

Ah, there remains a coast where we may never land:
Stony day and sun thick as mist.
There longing hangs dead upon the cross of the houses—
You nights, you curving sail-couches,
Remain on the kind sea of sleep!

The harbor lures, the morning-bell,
A bitter salt burns on our lips: the day!
Heavily we lift our weary lashes.
Odol beckons, blue on the dreary wash-stand.
Slipper-symphonies. Café au lait. Oh, man!

Klabund

FEVER

Often the road-menders gather
And break stone for the road-bed.
They put up a ladder
And hammer the stones into my head.

And my head becomes as hard as a street,
Where a tramway and a garbage-cart and a hearse rumble
and beat.

Gottfried Benn**MORGUE****I. LITTLE ASTER**

A drowned truck-driver was propped on the slab.
Someone had stuck a lavender aster
between his teeth.

As I cut out the tongue and the palate,
through the chest
under the skin,
with my long knife,

I must have touched the flower, for it slid
into the brain lying next.

I packed it into the cavity of the chest
among the excelsior
as it was sewn up.

Drink yourself full in your vase!
Rest softly,
little aster!

Gottfried Benn

MORGUE

II. LOVELY CHILDHOOD

The mouth of a girl who had long lain among the reeds
looked gnawed away.

As the breast was cut open, the gullet showed full of
holes.

Finally in a cavity below the diaphragm
a nest of young rats was discovered.

One little sister lay dead.

The others thrived on liver and kidneys,
drank the cold blood and
enjoyed a lovely childhood here.

And sweet and swift came their death also:
They were all thrown into the water together.
Oh, how the little muzzles squeaked!

Gottfried Benn

MAN AND WOMAN GO THROUGH THE
CANCER WARD

The man:

Here in these rows are wombs that have decayed,
and in this row are breasts that have decayed.
Bed beside stinking bed. Hourly the sisters change.

Come, quietly lift up this coverlet.
Look, this great mass of fat and ugly humours
was once some man's delight,
was ecstasy and home.

Come, look at the shrewd scars upon this breast.
Do you feel the rosary of small soft knots?
Touch it, no fear. The yielding flesh is numbed.

Here's one who bleeds as though from thirty bodies.
No one has so much blood.—
This one was cut:
they took a child out of her cancerous womb.

They let them sleep. All day, all night.—They tell
The newcomers: here sleep will make you well.—But
Sundays
one rouses them a bit for visitors.—

They take a little nourishment. Their backs
are sore. You see the flies. Occasionally
the sisters wash them. As one washes benches.—

Here the grave rises up about each bed.
And flesh is levelled down to earth. The fire
burns out. And sap prepares to flow. Earth calls.—

Georg Heym

THE DEMONS OF THE CITIES

They wander through the cities night enshrouds:
The cities cower, black, beneath their feet.
Upon their chins like sailors' beards the clouds
Are black with curling smoke and sooty sleet.

On seas of houses their long shadow sways
And snuffs ranked street-lamps out, as with a blow.
Upon the pavement, thick as fog, it weighs,
And gropes from house to house, solid and slow.

With one foot planted on a city square,
The other knee upon a tower, they stand,
And where the black rain falls they rear, with blare
Of quickened Pan's-pipes in a cloud-stormed land.

About their feet circles a ritornelle
With the sad music of the city's sea,
Like a great burying-song. The shrill tones swell
And rumble in the darkness, changefully.

They wander to the stream that, dark and wide,
As a bright reptile with gold-spotted back,
Turns in the lanterned dark from side to side
In its sad dance, while heaven's stare is black.

They lean upon the bridge, darkly agog,
And thrust their hands among the crowds that pass,
Like fauns who perch above a meadow bog
And plunge lean arms into the miry mass.

Now one stands up. He hangs a mask of gloom
Upon the white-cheeked moon. The night, like lead
From the dun heavens, settles as a doom
On houses into pitted darkness fled.

The shoulders of the cities crack. A gleam
Of fire from a roof burst open flies
Into the air. Big-boned, on the top beam
They sit and scream like cats against the skies.

A little room with glimmering shadows billows
Where one in labor shrieks her agony.
Her body lifts gigantic from the pillows.
And the huge devils stand about to see.

She clutches, shaking, at her torture-bed.
With her long shuddering cry the chamber heaves.
Now the fruit comes. Her womb gapes long and red,
And bleeding, for the child's last passage cleaves.

The devils' necks grow like giraffes'. The child
Is born without a head. The mother moans
And holds it. On her back, clammy and wild,
The frog-fingers of fear play, as she swoons.

But vast as giants now the demons loom.
Their horns in fury gore the bleeding skies.
An earthquake thunders in the cities' womb
About their hooves, where flint-struck fires rise.

Paul Zech

MACHINERY

Teeth of hard steel gleam regnant from the whirled
tangle of wheels. The mills turn round and round,
pouring in cloudbursts on the brick-paved ground
splinters of copper, crisply clipped and curled.
Their glacial coolness huge converters shed
on men whose naked flesh glitters with oil;
combs whirl, knives flash, and coil on monstrous coil
drops from bright shears to which this mass is fed.

Clenched fists, now here, now there, a sudden curse,
the foreman's whistle, and the stench grows worse
from muscles licked by flames that threaten death!
The bearded faces redden in a breath,
and suddenly: like polished glass, sharp eyes
stare inward, fixed in stricken, strange surprise.

Rudolf Leonhardt

THE DEAD LIEBKNECHT

All through the city lies the corpse of him,
in all courtyards, in all streets,
with his outpoured blood
all chambers have grown dim.

Now the sirens of the factories begin
their yawning drone,
endlessly long,
over the whole city their hollow noise they spin.

And with a glimmer
of keen
bright teeth,
his corpse is seen
to smile.

Kurt Heynicke

GETHSEMANE

All men are Christ.
In the dark garden we must drink the cup.
Father, let it not pass from us.
We are all of one love.
We are all deep pain.
All seek to be redeemed.
Father, Thy world is our cross.
Let it not pass from us.

Johannes R. Becher

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

Loudly they sang, on the steep mountain-pathway,
A fearless flock of lambs unshepherded!

"We were awaked by summons silver-voiced
Of stricken birds upon the fields of night."

The thin shifts on their bodies waved like banners!
Like crowns the stems of flowers were entwined!
Before their young procession bells pealed psalms:
"Oh, for a glimpse of sunned Jerusalem!"

"In the old forest hungry wolves will eat you!!!"
"The evil beasts will never dare to harm us,
—By the white Saviour shall we be guarded!!!"—

The storm smote into pulp the holy ship!
Now fiery eyes of giant sharks are swaying,
Eternal lamps that swing above their grave.

Albert Ehrenstein

ARES

Softly the waters ripple,
The meadows bleed with evening,
But uprearing the shaggy head of the beast,
Foe unto men,
I, Ares,
Cracking the weak nose and chin,
Twisting off towers in a rage,
Break your earth.
Leave off calling that God who does not hear.
This you cannot reason away:
A little sub-devil governs the earth,
He is served by folly and madness.
I stretched the hides of men on stakes around the cities.
I loaded my demon-shoulders
With the loose-hinged gates of the old fortresses,
I loose this arid war-time,
Stow Europe into the knapsack.
My butcher's arm is ruddy with your blood,
How the sight rejoices me!
The enemy flames up in the night bitter with rain,
Bombs tear apart your women,
The ground is strewn
With the scattered
Testicles of your sons,
Like the seeds of cucumbers.

By your child hands not to be turned aside,
Death takes hold of your masses.
Blood you give for dung,
Wealth for woe is flung,
The wolves vomit after my feasts are spread,
With your carrion they are overfed.
Is there a rest
From plague and pest?
In me there howls a lust
To finish you finally.

Paul Mayer

THERSITES

As Pelides rose from his tented bed
A smile lay on his lips, as vaguely bright
As fruiting memories of some petalled night.
His charger neighed, from tent to tent there spread
The shout of warriors fierce with lust to fight
For him, whose fame on their own deeds was shed.
But one was missing from those men of might,
Nor sought Achilles' praise, wherefor they bled.

He lay within his tent and cursed the day
That bore him, for inexorably his shield
Mirrored his crippled body in its field.
He wept himself to sleep, and saw a-sway
Upon a cross a thorn-crowned man, undone.
He would have spoken, but the dream was gone.

Wilhelm Klemm**THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE**

Slowly the stones begin to rouse themselves and to talk.
The grasses stiffen to green metal. Woods,
Thick, crouching ambush, devour distant columns.
The sky, that chalk-white secret, threatens to burst.
Two colossal hours unroll into minutes.
The empty horizon swells.

My heart is as big as Germany and France together,
Pierced by all the shots of the world.
The battery heaves its leonine voice
Six times into the distance. Grenades are howling.
Silence. Far off, smokes the fire of the infantry,
For days, for weeks.

Kurt Heynicke

OBSERVATION POST

The hills march across my eyes,
the wood gives birth to the red sentinel moon.
A machine-gun sputters behind the stars.
An hour I live with the silence.
Out of the graves
morning gropes.
An amen
drips into my thoughts.

Alfred Vagts

MEMORIES IN HOSPITAL

The beds are hutches, snow-frozen, where I lie, leaking
away.

As I fall, stars become golden eels, and hang in the
twisted telegraph wires.

My wound is a battered door in my body ;
over any hump of my body troops climb out of my back
into the morning.

Meadows and marshes grow into my boots ;
earth will not let me go : I am a fragment of her hibernal
sleep.

A tent of memories blows open and rests cloudily upon
an abandoned pyramid of guns :

my home-village moves towards its church-tower,
hands come down, red-stained, from a cross, and find me.

The sobs of a motor are mingled with mine.

Out of the river-valley, distance lifts its short-necked
head ;

its head falls, and on the bleeding trunk a town burns.

The new dressing for my wound holds me like a blue
scarf of sky ;

my eyelids feel the warm breath of a pure presence
that bends above my couch, again and yet again.

Iwan Goll

TORSO: IV

Europe, you shuddering torso!

You stand on the plinth of wholesale graves, deep in the
rubbish of centuries of battles.

Nothing but a black coil, a raw heaving of the earth
toward the sky.

You towering accusation of humankind: torso, you death-
less monument of murder,

The coming conquerors already dance about you, you
idol of iron wars.

A yellow sea will rise to swallow you. The white negroes
of America will slink round you.

All your freedoms will fly off like a beautiful dream.

Your martyrs will kiss the knees of their tyrants.

On the Nevsky Prospekt there will be an eternal burial.

In the emperors' palaces a harsh prison will be
reared.

Europe, you crumbling torso, you rump of the world!

Adolf von Hatzfeld

SUMMER

I broke through to you, Beloved, in the grassy plains of
the Northland,
like the bursting earth my Spring heart broke through.
I drew toward you, Beloved, in the maddening resin-
scent of trees,
in the odor of moist seeds,
with the tinkling moon-song in the stirred air.
I broke through to you, Beloved, with the stags of the
southern forests,
with the frantic herds of mustangs. The oxen leapt.
Butterflies were dancing, beetles and shimmering swarms
of gnats.
By day their hosts stood shadowing the sun
like clouds, singing above my head ;
trembling and drunken as I, they moved toward their
beloved.
I flew to you serenely with the lifting blood of birds
high in the air, to you, Beloved,
to you, Beloved, eternal summons,
eternal tumult, southwind in the hard snow of my winter.
But God sounded the horn of Summer.
I drew toward you, Beloved, to become one with you,
madness in my blood, to become one with you,
a tumbling avalanche upon the mountains of your body,
Beloved,

radiant flowers upon the meadows of your soul, Beloved,
the wide mouth, the stream pouring into your sea, Be-
loved,
the raging storm, Beloved, in you, the night.

Klabund

THE POET TO HIS BELOVED

Last night when I awoke, I lay naked, and my heart had
burst open like a flower.

It blossomed upon my breast like a poppy, a swarm of
humble-bees hung about it.

They sang, they sang.

But my body was a wheat-field.

I rocked, I rocked.

And winds passed over me like warm hands.

And a hot hand was among the winds, groping delicately
toward my heart.

On a slender stem swayed my heart.

It was grasped, it was broken.

By morning red dew lay on the meadow.

Ernst Stadler

IN THE MORNING

Your body's silhouette stands darkly in the morning before the troubled light

Of the drawn blinds. I sense, lying in bed, your face turned toward me like the host in some dim rite.

As from my arms you loose yourself, your whispered "I must go" reaches the farthest door of my dream's shuttered rest—

Now, as though veiled, I see your hand, as with deft touch it smooths the shirt upon your breast. . . .

The socks . . . and now the coat . . . the hair swept back . . . already you are strange, dressed for the world and the day . . .

I open the door softly . . . kiss you . . . you nod, already far, a farewell . . . and are gone away.

I hear your soft tread on the steps, I listen, lying in bed again,

Again I am locked in the scent of your body, as streaming out of the pillows it winds warmly into my brain.

Morning grows brighter. The curtain blows. Young wind and sun press inward, flutter and peep.

Tears well up . . . music of morning . . . sung to by the dreams of morning softly I fall asleep.

Paul Mayer

FOURTEEN STATIONS OF
LOVE: XIII

Love sank like the town
Vineta, whose treasure
Had weighted her down,
Overweary of pleasure.

In dreams are heard
The blood's bells that are fled,
When I think of a word
That you once said.

René Schickele

BALLAD OF OUR DEAR LADY OF THE RAIL-
WAY CARRIAGE

(AT THE STATION)

A train stops, that is not bound whither you would fare.
While it halts here, wanderer, say your prayer.

Dear Lady in the train,
Your eyes give pain
wounding as hate. Oh, You are worn with grief.
Your wry mouth hurts—I vow
that if the dog that now
warms Your little feet were only asleep,
my passion's heat would burn away Your woe!
And like two hares Your pulses then would leap
till the city was nearly reached, when they would bounce
away and disappear.
There I would like to find You again, Your arched mouth
smiling, grave and dear.

Wanderer, make the sign of the cross, having said your
prayer.

A train moves on, that is not bound whither you must
fare.

Kurt Heynicke

AT MIDNIGHT

Your love is a white doe
that flees into the midnight of my desire,
a tree of tears stands in the wood of my dreams youward;
now you are here—

The moon pours me fulfillment from the bowl of its
splendor—

I love you,

you,

and place the scent of cloves before your chamber,
and throw narcissus over your bed.

I myself come, as silver as you,

and arch myself high,

a sacred grove

above the altar of your reverent soul.

Max Herrmann-Neisse

LEGEND OF THE BEWITCHED NUNNERY

The nuns kept to their garden all night long,
for sudden fear stirred in the sultry cells;
they prayed to the cool God of silver wells,
and through their dreams stars leapt and well-springs
flung.

—The morning mill claps loudly. Hounds give tongue.—
And as with timid steps at matin-bells
they slowly moved back to their cubicles,
things started in to change, alluring, wrong.

For altar-piece and image, book and dove
were tangled as in shameless sweet embrace.
Tall tapers breathed sharp fragrances of love.

And lo, before the nuns could flee the place,
they felt themselves unveiled; they swayed and quivered,
to the Unseen deliciously delivered.

Claire Studer-Goll

PRAYER

In the bright bay of your morning, O God,
I kneel to you with the trees,
As they, I stretch out my arms in ecstasy,
To pour out my voice before you,
To open myself to you with the bridal buds,
And to sob to you with all the well-springs of the earth.
You, who dwell in the willow's gentle cataract,
You, who threaten in the rapture of fire,
You, who are one with every urge: rain and weeping
 and waterfalls . . .
You, whose fragrance breathes in the womanly blooming
 of flowers,
Who sound from the deep brooks of song!
O voluptuous joy of kneeling before you,
Of surrender to you, most unearthly one!

Already the fugue of day is hushed, and your narcissus
 breath
Blows over me in the soft night-wind.
And again in the dark inlet of your evening
I kneel before the abyss of your stillness
To create you anew out of my love.

Theodor Däubler

THE ARC-LAMPS

The arc-lamps crown the sunset with their glimmer,
Their lilac beauty will outlive its glow.
On the wild crowd they shed a ghostly shimmer.
They are glazed fruits from worlds we do not know.

Is not the din hushed by the gentle trickle
Of light they pour? I cannot fathom them.
Wise stars, a moon swinging an evil sickle.
Why do you pale beneath the starry diadem?

Klabund**JOURNEY FROM COPENHAGEN TO
SKODSBORG**

Across the hedge the elder-blossoms lean
To bid me stay, with pleadings more than human.
For they are mine, and I to them have been
Given, as is remembrance to a woman.

The sea runs blue. More violet the bloom
Of my heart's flowers, where swayed syringas bud.
Mimosa nears. Blonde Spring leaps up in spume
To beckon me into the early flood.

The farther coast, which Swedish fog invests,
Crooks a slim finger, as to importune.
And my hands clasp, as though they held two breasts,
The sun and moon.

Klabund

THE WIND STRODE WILDLY

Wildly up from the river-bank strode the wind,
He stamped like a giant upon the corn-fields and left
 them thinned.
Then rain lashed down; rain-rivulets like silver hounds
 leapt, jaw by jaw,
Before me over the black soil—and in their depths I saw
The heavens: cloudy, broken, lightning-riven—and two
 eyes,
Cloudy, broken, lightning-riven like the skies.

Georg Heym

EVENING

The crimsoned day is steeped in Tyrian dyes,
The stream runs white, washed with a fabulous glaze.
A sail. One with the flying vessel, flies
The skipper's silhouette, black on the blaze.

On every island autumn's forests lift
Their ruddy heads where space spreads wide her wings.
From dark defiles low, leafy murmurs drift,
Of woodland music, soft as cithern strings.

With outpoured darkness now the east is soaked,—
Like blue wine from an urn that careless hands
Have broken. And afar, in mourning cloaked,
Tall night, on shadowy buskins, mutely stands.

Wilhelm Klemm

NIGHT

The river mutters to itself in the darkness
Like an actor rehearsing his rôle by night.
At intervals one hears time's eyelashes flutter.

People are sleeping, some upon pillows, some upon white
cliffs.
Some of them have immense, terrible thumbs.
Women toss their long hair across their faces.

Meanwhile grey castles slowly fall to ruin.
Thin, black grasses arise,
Mountains uplift their white antlers.

Lord, give me a sign that you still live!
I begin to freeze and to be afraid.
It is already midnight. Hark!

The minster begins to sing in his brazen voice:
An old sentinel full of strength and troth,
Who chanting, cries the hour, and then is still.

Then night sinks deeper, into dreamless dark.
Only the river rehearses its spectral rôle:
To be or not to be. . . .

Paul Mayer

WINTER

All the roads are lost,
Vanished under snows,
Only a blind man goes
Through the shuddering frost.

And in meagre grey
Stand the nun-like trees,
Penitents whose knees
Tremble as they pray.

Once more crucified,
The naked Christ hangs here,
A hungry crow flies near
And pecks His breast and side.

Iwan Goll

THE PEAR-TREE

Here once the evenings sobbed,
Here once the angels lay in the curve of morning.
How the hill streamed to your feet like a floating nymph,
You god of the fields! And now:
O pear-tree in despair's garden! Grizzled hunchback!
Your hungry supplication, your slack begging arm
Scratches the weary sun!
Here the mourner squats of nights and jeers at autumn.
And afternoons, the street-gamins chirp to you. A
 child's go-cart
Leans in the imagined shadow of your foliage:
You are a helpless, mute cry of the earth,
Sick, afflicted tree,
In the valley of rubbish heaps and tin cans!
And only the autumn wind, your banished brother,
Sometimes rains upon your galled spirit
And brings you a breath of sea, a memory of stars.

Alfred Lichtenstein

FOG

By a soft mist the world has been destroyed.
The bloodless trees fade out in smoky death.
Vague shadows sway, where cries ring down the void.
And burning bistres vanish like a breath.

The gas-lamps are like flies a web has caught.
Each seeks escape, with faint and flickering jerks.
But glimmering on high, she who has wrought
The web of mist: the vile moon-spider lurks.

But we, the godless, death's most fitting prize,
Trample this desolate splendor with despite.
And dumbly our pale melancholic eyes
Pierce as with blunted spears the swollen night.

Georg Heym

MOON

He whom the far horizon bore, blood-red,
He who from hell's great gullet hugely rose,
Black clouds wreathed close about his purple head,
As round the brow of gods acanthus blows,

He plants his golden foot there where he wills,
And like an athlete heaves his mighty chest,
And like a Parthian prince he climbs the hills,
His curls shed burning from his helmet's crest.

High over Sardis and black gulfs of night,
On silvered towers, on seas of battlements,
Where sentinels fill their loud trumps with might,
He summons morning from far Pontic tents.

Slumbering at his feet, broad Asia lies
In the blue shadows, under Ararat,
Whose snowy head gleams on the lonely skies,
To where Arabia lets soft waters pat

Her pale feet, wanton and imperious,
While southward, like some great and shining swan
Upon the waters nods white Sirius,
And singing, down the oceans passes on.

With vasty bridges, blue as naked steel,
With walls as white as marble, resting lies
Tall Nineveh, where darkling valleys kneel,
And a few torches throw against the skies

Their light like lances, and where darkly gleams
Euphrates, with his head plunged in the waste.
And Shushan rests, while round her brow fly dreams
Still drunken with the wine's wild honied taste.

Above the black stream, high upon the dome,
Listening to some wandering evil star,
A white-robed star-gazer sees planets gloam,
And beckons Aldebaran from afar,

While he wars with the moon for whitest light
Where night eternal streams, and on the shore
Of distant deserts, with blue glitter bright,
Run lonely brooks, and winds more softly soar

About bare temples and far olive-trees,—
A silver sea, and in a thin ravine
Of ancient mountains, deeply hidden, flees
A gentle water where dark elms now lean.

Kurt Heynicke

EXALTATION

Lift your heart in flooding silence;
hours nod in shadow, evening-eyed.
Lift your faces toward the lighted sky.
Stars, not hearts, are throbbing in our breasts.

Through the gates of evening we are guided home
on bright feet under a golden dome,
the world wanders, drunk with ecstasy.

We are treading on the path of stars,
from the god-ploughed sod a tree springs toward the
light:
through the leafage gleam a thousand fruits.

We dream as coral dream in a slow sea.
We wait as a deer waits to meet the moon at night.

Gottfried Benn

SONGS

1. Oh, that we were our primal ancestors.
In a warm bog a little clump of slime.
That from our sap, mute plasm and blind spores,
Cool deaths, calm lives to viewless growth might
climb.

A leaf of seaweed or a dune, wind-fed,
Whose stolid base but casual waves would touch.
A sea-gull's wing, a dragon-fly's bright head
Would be too intricate, endure too much.

2. Lovers and mockers, both are despicable.
All longing, all despair, and those who hope.
We are diseasèd gods, and miserable,
And yet too often godward do we grope.

The silken bay. The woods' dark fantasies.
Stars hugely blossoming, like vast snow-balls.
The velvet leap of panthers through the trees.
The shore is everywhere. And always the sea
calls.—

Who's Who in Contemporary German Poetry

This roster does not pretend to completeness. The younger generation is more fully represented than the older men, whose biographies can be found elsewhere. Unless otherwise indicated, the passages here quoted come from autobiographical sketches supplied by the authors. The notes are purely factual, all critical comment being relegated to the Introduction.

JOHANNES R. BECHER

"I have nothing further to tell you about my career, etc., than that I was born in Munich on May 22, 1891. Those sides of my life which have not taken shape in my work in no way concern the public."

Becher began publishing in 1914, and has since brought out some ten volumes of verse.

GOTTFRIED BENN

was born in 1886, grew up in the province of Brandenburg, and has since led an uneventful existence. He is a physician for skin diseases, practicing in Berlin. He was the chief surgeon of the German Government at Brussels during the occupation of Belgium. His collected works, which include stories and several dramatic sketches, were published in 1922.

RUDOLF BORCHARDT

is a Berlin poet, the author of *Jugend Gedichte* (1920).

MAX BROD

was born in Prague in 1884. Between 1907 and 1918 he published three volumes of verse. He is also the author of several volumes of short stories, six novels and some plays. In collaboration with Franz Blei, Brod has translated Jules Laforgue.

THEODOR DÄUBLER

was born of German parents in Trieste in 1876 and received a bi-lingual education in German and Italian. He

has lived in the capitals of Italy, France, Austria, and Germany, but the Mediterranean influences of his youth remain strong, and his home is now in Greece. He attributes the strongest stimulus to his work to his sojourn in Paris. He has written extensively on metaphysics, art, and music, and has published three volumes of lyrics.

MAX DAUTHENDEY

arrived in this world in 1867 (in Würtzburg), and visited almost every part of it before he ended his days in Dutch Java in 1918. Some of his early verse was written in Sweden and printed in Mexico. The thirty-three volumes which this traveled poet has to his credit include, besides verse,—novels, dramas, and writings in a lighter vein. In his *Geflügelte Erde, ein Lied der Liebe und der Wunder um Sieben Meeren* we have the poetic log-book of his first voyage around the world. Albert Langen Verlag, of Munich, published most of his books.

RICHARD DEHMEL

was born in 1863 in the province of Brandenburg, the eldest son of a forester. He completed his studies in philosophy, science, and political economy at the universities of Danzig and Leipzig, in 1887, when he became secretary of the Association of German Private Fire Insurance Companies, a position which he held for eight years. At the age of thirty-two he began to devote himself entirely to literature, and to earn his living by his pen. Detlev von Liliencron was his close friend. In the next few years he traveled extensively. When the war broke out he volunteered and was accepted for military service. He died in 1920. The bulk of his work was collected in ten volumes in 1906-09.

ALBERT EHRENSTEIN

"All I know of my life is that I was born on December 23, 1886."

The poet is a Viennese, although most of his books were published in Germany, his first volume appearing in 1914. Besides four volumes of poetry, he has also written some fiction.

STEFAN GEORGE

Born in 1868 at Büdesheim, Hesse, he went to school in Darmstadt and studied philology and the history of art at

the universities of Paris, Berlin, and Munich. Thereafter he spent some years in travel. While he was still a student he began to write verse, and within the last twenty years he has published about a dozen volumes of poetry. In 1892 he founded *Die Blaetter der Kunst*, a magazine published for a limited group of subscribers and occasionally issuing a volume of selections for the general. George has translated Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Shakespeare's sonnets, and selections from the poetry of Rossetti, Swinburne, Dowson, and several modern French poets.

IWAN GOLL

"has no country: by fate a Jew, by chance born in France, by virtue of a stamped paper, a German.

"Iwan Goll has no age: his childhood was sucked up by bloodless old men. The war-god killed the youth. But to become a human being, how many lives are necessary!

"Lonely and kind, after the fashion of the silent trees and the dumb stones: thus would he be furthest from things earthly and nearest to art." (So Goll writes of himself in an autobiographic note contributed to a recent German anthology.)

A bi-lingual Alsatian, he has published verse and dramatic writings in both German and French, and likes to consider himself a link between Berlin and Paris. One guesses from his work that he has lived in the United States; it is curious to note that he believes in the cultural kinship of America and Germany. "They are the two most modern nations on earth. In both there is that good and not at all contemptible barbarity, that is, lack of sentimentality, which shows forth their spiritual affinity."

WALTER HASENCLEVER

"The external facts of my life are: born July 8, 1890, at Aachen, Gymnasium education there in the humanities, university studies at Oxford, Lausanne and Leipzig, traveled, in 1915 war service, in 1916 military hospital, 1917 received the Kleist prize, have since resided in Dresden. In 1913 I published my first book of poems: *Der Jüngling*, a complete expression in epic form of the experiences of the spiritually sensitive youth. In 1914 appeared my drama *Der Sohn*, written on the Belgian coast where, in the same year, the cannon of the world war were to be reared, and first printed in *Die Weissen Blätter*. Substantially a battle-cry of youth in its war with age, through its inherent political tendencies it assumed the significance of a mani-

festo of the revolutionary generation in the theatre. This development was strengthened by the outbreak of the war. Already in the fall of 1914 I began the pacifistic dramatic poem *Der Reiter*, directed against the war and the military caste. Its publication as well as the staging of *Der Sohn* was prohibited by the censorship. The poem was completed in 1915 in Galicia and only in 1916 did it appear, privately published by the author, in an edition of 15 copies which were sent to several important people, among them the Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg. The censorship responded to this effort to influence the conduct of the war through the drama by destroying the plates.

"While I was at the front I wrote those poems which, in the course of the war and the revolution, stamped me as a political writer, and which appeared in the volume *Tod und Auferstehung*, completed in 1916. In the tragedy *Antigone*, where, to deceive the censor, antique material was given modern attributes, the attempt to make the drama a vehicle of political thought was finally realized."

In the autobiography contributed to *Menschheitsdämmerung*, a German anthology, the poet writes: "There (at Oxford) I wrote my first piece. The cost of printing it I won at poker. . . . In the army I served as interpreter, as buyer for the quartermaster's department, and with the kitchen-police."

ADOLF VON HATZFELD

was born in 1892 in Westphalia. Upon his graduation from a secondary school, he turned to a business career, soon giving this up for the army. At the age of twenty-one he became blind through an attempt at suicide. Thereafter he devoted himself to the study of languages and philosophy at various German universities. The first of his three volumes of verse was published in 1916. He is also the author of a novel.

The poet expresses a doubt in his letter to the editors as to whether modern German poetry, with its sophistication, intellectualism, and doctrinaire quality can appeal to the big, broad-shouldered, emotional Americans—whom he learned to know in the Army of Occupation.

MAX HERRMANN-NEISSE

was born in 1886 in Silesia. As the deformed and only child of well-to-do parents, he led a sheltered life. His university studies centered about the history of art and literature. The war ruined his father's business and ulti-

mately brought about the tragic death of both parents. With his wife Herrmann-Neisse went to Berlin, where he held a subordinate position in a publishing house till 1919. At present he is a free lance, feeling, he writes, that it is his fate to be a hapless poet in a world of businessmen. His first book appeared in 1906. He has since written a dozen others, including verse, novels, and dramas.

GEORG HEYM

Coming of an old family of civil servants and clergymen, Georg Heym was born in 1887 in Silesia. As an adolescent he came to Berlin, where he later studied law. He was drowned while skating on the Havel, in 1912. He has left two books of poetry and a volume of stories.

KURT HEYNICKE

"Born in 1891 at Liegnitz, I come from the proletariat. I took part in the war as a private, mostly at the front. Since childhood until recently I held some position, the last one in the industrial field. This I had to give up on account of my health. Now I get along somehow."

Heynicke is the author of half a dozen volumes of poems and one play.

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

"Hugo von Hofmannsthal was born in 1874 in Vienna, received his secondary education in his native city, and later studied law and Romance philology at the University of Vienna. His doctor's dissertation was on Victor Hugo.

"At the age of seventeen he made his first public appearance as an author with the dramatic piece, *Gestern*. In 1893 followed *Der Tor und der Tod*, and the next year the remaining short plays and many of his poems. His drama *Elektra* was used by Richard Strauss as the libretto for an opera. Then came the libretti for the Strauss operas: *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne aus Naxos*, and in 1914 *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*. Adapting an old English morality play, he wrote *Jedermann*, a piece which is at present played almost throughout Europe, and which will probably be staged in England also next fall by Martin Harvey. His comedy *Der Schwierige* scored a great success in 1921 upon its first presentation in Munich. His prose writings covering the years 1900-1920 consist of the short stories: *Das Märchen der vier hundert sechs und siebzigsten Nacht*, *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*, and three volumes of essays, speeches, etc. This summer (1922) a

spiritual drama, *Der Grosse Welttheater*, is to be played at Salzburg in the course of the local festival, probably in a church."

ARNO HOLZ

In explaining why he had sent no autobiographic notice, this author alleged lack of time and said further: "I have the feeling that the work should speak, the work alone. As a human being, I concern no one."

Holz was born in 1863 at Rastenburg, in East Prussia, and since the age of twelve has been living in Berlin. His voluminous writings brought him fame but no fortune. Writing in 1918, he declared: "It is unfortunately no exaggeration for me to say and insist that out of the average ten hours a day which I could devote to my work, I was and indeed still am condemned by unfavorable circumstances—or, in plain language, by poverty and cares—to waste and fritter away nine hours in order to secure the precarious livelihood which will give me the one free hour."

HERMANN KASACK

"Born 1896 at Potsdam. Later studied history of literature in Berlin and Munich. At the outbreak of the war I was in England, during the war for a time in Brussels. You can imagine that I was a convinced pacifist throughout the war, and, besides, I have the lowest opinion of these times."

Kasack is the author of three books of verse and of other imaginative writings.

KLABUND (pseudonym of ALFRED HENSCHKE, born 1891).

In his letter Klabund refers the editors to the following autobiographic notice which appeared in 1919:

"At this writing I am twenty-seven years old. But I could also say three years, or 50,000. I come from Austria. I am a Prussian. My colors you know: they are black and white. Black—that is the night, and white, that is the day. I am day and night. I was born in Austria, but before that I lived in China and with large, horn-spectacles on my nose I wrote little verses upon long strips of silk. I have yet far to go. Whoever wants to join me for an hour is welcome. I must be born over and over again. I remember very well how I was once a hare and hopped over the fields and ate cabbage. Later I was a vulture, who used to peck out the hares' eyes.

Thus I murdered myself. I was good. I was bad. I was lovely and ugly, charming and hateful, cowardly and brave, masterful and servile. I love people, but I love them no more than animals, or stars, with whom I am as well able to converse as with you, my human brothers. I love women. Above all, the dearest woman, who was for me both the daughter and the mother of God. She has long since returned to His throne. There she stands, a lily in her hand, and she smiles down at, and weeps over me.—What you know is only a part of what I have composed. Often the wind scattered my pages. In my many wanderings I lost the manuscripts of two dramas. Let him who found them keep them, whether he uses them to paper his walls or whether he reads them to his wife after the evening meal. I must go on fighting with a hot blade the sounding battles within me to the end. . . .”

Klabund has nearly forty volumes to his credit, of which eight consist of lyrics.

WILHELM KLEMM

“Born 1881, physician, lives in Leipzig (his native city). Author of seven books of poems, the first published in 1915.”

GEORG KULKA

was born in a town near Vienna in 1897. He is a contributor to *Aktion* and the author of two volumes of poetry.

ELSE LASKER-SCHUELER

“I was born in Thebes (Egypt), even if I came into the world in Elberfeld in the Rhineland. Until the age of eleven I went to school, became Robinson [Crusoe?], lived for five years in the Orient, and since then I have been vegetating.”

This autobiographic note is taken from a German anthology, published in 1920. Lasker-Schueler is the author of some nine books, including poems, stories, essays, and a play. Her collected works have recently been published by one German house and her collected poems by another.

RUDOLF LEONHARDT

“The private dates of my development are of no significance. And what could be of general interest is written in my books.” Those who care about the details of his life, the poet asks to wait for the publication of his diaries

upon his death. He was born in 1889 in Posen. He is the author of some thirteen volumes of verse and prose and also of a tragedy.

ALFRED LICHTENSTEIN

fell in the war in September, 1914, at the age of twenty-five, after having published one book of verse the previous year. A posthumous volume appeared in 1919.

DETLEV VON LILIENCRON

came from a family of Danish barons of Schleswig-Holstein, yet his paternal grandmother herded swine. His mother was the daughter of General von Harten, a German-American who fought in the Revolutionary War and was an associate of Washington. She herself, born in Philadelphia and educated in England, always considered English her mother-tongue. Detlev (Friedrich Adolf Axel) came into the world in 1844 at Kiel. The family was by this time greatly impoverished and the boy was brought up in shabby gentility. He cared little for learning, but was an apt musician, and above all, burning with martial ambitions. At the age of twenty-one he became a lieutenant in the Prussian army. Before he earned that rank he had fought the Polish rebels, in 1866 he fought the Austrians, and in 1870-71 he fought the French, with great zeal and distinction. The arts of peace involved a love-affair, but his fiancée was poor, and he himself harassed by debts, which rolled up to such an extent that he had to quit the army, and set sail for America (1875). He looked forward to a military career in some South American Republic, but lack of funds stranded him in New York. He eventually traveled as far as the Great Lakes and Texas, making his way by jockeying, house-painting, and teaching languages and piano. In New York he played in a Bowery tavern, and spent more than one night in a five-cent lodging-house. He wrote a poem on Broadway which, however, he failed to incorporate in his books. Early in 1877 he is back in Germany, where he finally marries the girl and obtains a governmental position. He continues to compose poems and contract debts, these finally forcing him to quit his post in 1885. He becomes dependent on his writing. Harassed by countless debts and two divorces, he married for the third and last time, and lived happily in a home provided by wealthy friends. In 1909 he died, as he had lived, in poverty.

Who's Who in German Poetry 195

ERNST WILHELM LOTZ

was born in 1890 in Kulm. He was an army officer and fell early in the war. A book of his poems appeared posthumously in 1917.

PAUL MAYER

"The son of a factory-owner, I was born in Cologne in 1889. Upon graduation from secondary school in my native town, I studied law, philosophy, and history in the universities of Munich, Berlin, Freiburg, Bonn. Upon passing my doctoral and bar examinations, I practiced law for a time. At present I am the literary editor of the Ernst Rowohlt Verlag in Berlin."

Mayer has published four volumes of verse. During the war he wrote pacifist poems.

ALFRED RICHARD MEYER

a native of Schwerin, was born in 1882. His first volume of verse, published in 1902, was followed by a dozen others. He has also written some prose.

ALFRED MOMBERT

"I was born," writes Mombert in a story of his life published in 1911, "at Karlsruhe, Baden, in 1872. Broad forests filled my childhood with their murmur. At school classical antiquity. Then the welcome regimentals of New Germany. Study of law (and other sciences) at four universities (1891-95). LL.D. (1897). Seven years of law practice (till 1906). Travel, wide and frequent. The joys of the Vesuvius littoral. Upon Ætna. Montserrat, the Parthenon, the Alhambra. In Jerusalem. In the tombs of the Thebaid. Serenity of the sea. Solemnity of the desert. Since early youth annually the triumph of steep Alpine peaks." Mombert has always been a good European, in the Nietzschean sense, a man soaked in the art, the literature, the music, and the philosophy of past and present.

He began publishing in the middle nineties, and has since brought out six volumes of verse and a dramatic trilogy, *Aeon*.

CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN

was born in Munich in 1871 and was carried off by consumption in 1914. In the interval he published seven volumes of poetry, of which the collections of grotesques:

196 *Who's Who in German Poetry*

Galgenlieder (1905) and *Palmström* (1910) are perhaps the best known. A posthumous volume appeared in 1918.

KARL OTTEN

who was born in 1889 in Aix-la-Chapelle, states in an autobiographic note: "All that I can say of my life is that it has been devoted to the happiness and victory of the poor, the proletariat." He has published several volumes.

E. A. RHEINHARDT

"I was born in Vienna in 1889; am half-Italian. Studied medicine in Vienna. . . . I served in the army from the very beginning to the end of the war and was indescribably miserable. . . . For the last two years I have been living in Munich in the capacity of literary editor in a large publishing house. I do this reluctantly and simply to earn my living, as in our country at present purely literary work affords a livelihood only to two or three long established authors and to writers of thrillers." Rheinhardt has three books to his credit.

RAINER MARIA RILKE

Coming of an ancient aristocratic family, Rilke was born in Prague in 1875. Although originally destined for the military career traditional for the sons of the house, he rejected this for the study of philosophy and art at the universities of Prague, Munich, and Berlin. He traveled in Russia, and lived in France and Italy, and for some time was Rodin's private secretary. Besides some fiction and a book on Rodin, Rilke has to his credit the following volumes of poetry: *Erste Gedichte*, comprising the poems written between 1896 and 1898; *Frühe Gedichte; Buch der Bilder* (1902); *Stundenbuch* (published in 1906, after several years of work on it); *Neue Gedichte*, volumes I and II (1907-08).

EUGEN ROTH

"I was born 1895 in Munich, and have since lived in that city. Have just completed my university studies. I took part in the war as a volunteer, and at Ypres I was seriously wounded. I was never a jingoist, nor am I a vague phantast. I make an effort to be a human being, and that is difficult enough in our circumstances. . . . I make a living as an editor and a journalist."

Roth is the author of two books.

RICHARD SCHAUKAL

"As for dates, here they are briefly: born at Brünn in Moravia in 1874, father a merchant, studies in law and philosophy at the University of Vienna, doctor juris 1898, entered government service in 1897, beginning 1903 attached to the præsidium of the Council of Ministers, beginning 1908 employed in the Ministry of Public Works, in 1918 retired, beginning 1909 Ministerial Counsellor (*Ministerialrat*).—Began poetic career with *Verse*, 1896, and *Meine Gärten: Einsame Verse*, 1897; my chief lyrical works are: *Sehnsucht*, 1900, *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, 1904, *Buch der Seele*, 1908, *Herbst*, 1914, *Heimat der Seele*, 1915, *Eherne Sonette*, 1914-15, *Jahresneige*, 1922."

Schaukal also lays claim to the titles of essayist, short-story writer, dramatist, philosopher, philologist, critic, and translator. Some of his best poems are to be found in *Ausgewählte Gedichte*.

RENÈ SCHICKELE

came into the world in 1883. He is an Alsatian by birth and an internationalist by conviction. He has studied in the universities of Germany and France, and traveled widely in Europe and in the Orient. During the war he drew down upon himself the wrath of the peoples on both sides of the Rhine by his resolute pacifism and his demand for Alsatian autonomy. His first volume of lyrics appeared in 1901, and in 1915 he brought out a selection from his five previously published books of verse. He has a number of novels and dramas to his credit.

OSKAR SCHUERER

A native of Augsburg, Schuerer was born in 1892. He was twenty-seven when he published his first volume of verse, which has been followed by two more.

ERNST STADLER

An Alsatian, born in 1883, Stadler was instructor in the German language and literature at Strassburg. He was killed early in the war. He has two volumes of poems to his credit.

AUGUST STRAMM

was born in 1874 in Westphalia. He served as post-master for some years and fell in the war in 1915. His collected works in three volumes appeared in 1919.

198 *Who's Who in German Poetry*

CLAIRE STUDER-GOLL

was born in Munich in 1892. She is the wife of Iwan Goll and the author of a volume of lyrics and an anthology of American poetry, which she selected and translated into German. Its title is *Die Neue Welt, eine Anthologie jünger amerikanischer Lyrik*.

GEORG TRAKL

was born in 1887 in Salzburg, Austria. For a time he served as army apothecary in the garrison hospital of Innsbruck. He was a heavy drinker, addicted to drugs, but withal an unworldly and lovable creature. After brief service in the field he was put under observation in the military hospital of Cracow to determine his sanity. He died there in November, 1914, presumably a suicide. His collected works were published in 1919.

JOHANNES URZIDIL

was born in Prague in 1896. In 1919 he published his first book of poems. His present activities are largely political, and he is devoting himself to effecting an understanding between the Germans and the Czechs.

ALFRED VAGTS

"I was born in 1892 in a village between the two rivers, the Elbe and the Weser, which are twinned like the Euphrates and the Tigris, Hamburg being the Babylon of my youth. Over my cradle the winged shadow of a windmill made numberless crosses. . . . Studied in the schools and universities of Ottendorf, Hannover, and Munich. . . . Served throughout the war, mostly in Russia; war-poems, which I would call pitiless lyrical chronicles, first made my name known."

Vagts is the author of one volume of verse.

CARL MARIA WEBER

"I was born in 1890 in Düsseldorf on the Rhine. . . . At high school (*Gymnasium*) I learned the language of the Greeks. . . . This was the most notable event of those joyless school years. Up to the outbreak of the war I studied philosophy, æsthetics, history of literature and art at Bonn. The subsequent four years I was in uniform (front and garrison duty): the bitterest, most horrible and helpless period of my life, the infernal intermezzo,—but also a period which was rich in substantial development.

Who's Who in German Poetry 199

... Both spiritually and politically I was forced to the extreme left, without being able to attach myself to any political party. . . ."

At present the poet is on the teaching staff of the celebrated German school known as the *Freie Schulgemeinde*, Dickersdorf, situated in Thuringen. He has published three volumes of verse.

ARMIN T. WEGNER

was born in 1896 at Elberfeld, the son of a comfortably situated Prussian official. He combined his school years with his *Wanderjahre* and finally came to Berlin, where he found himself as a poet. Like Mombert, he is a travelled Doctor of Laws. He journeyed as far as Africa. The war landed him in the Near East, where his experience afforded him material for two books, one of which dealt with the miseries of Armenia. He is the head of the Union Against Military Service, which is the German section of "Paco" (the International of objectors to military service). Wegner has published four volumes of poems and a novel.

FRANZ WERFEL

"Born in 1890 in Prague, where I spent my school days and my youth. 1910 in Hamburg, where I wrote the larger part of my first book. 1911-12 were spent in military service (artillery) at Prague. In Leipzig from 1912 to the beginning of 1915. Then in the field on the Russian front till August, 1917. Since then I have been living in Vienna. In addition to my books of poems I have written and published to date one novel, and a large fragment of a novel, short stories and prose fantasies; further, several dramas which are being staged in Germany and Austria, as well as a number of small poetic writings and essays."

During the years 1911 to 1921 Werfel published six volumes of verse.

ALFRED WOLFENSTEIN

"I was born in 1888 at Halle, and since 1916 I have been living in Munich. I spent my childhood in the country, moving later to Berlin. Thus the free horizons to which my soul was first accustomed were crossed by the enormously artificial nature of the great city. The many arms of its stormy intellectual energies soon took hold of me, all the more since I, as a Jew, was more easily attracted toward the spheres of spirituality. For the same reason,

however, the war could not for a moment lead either my heart or my reason astray, and my poetry turned against the all too real events: from a distance of super-reality.

"I have been publishing poetry since 1912, especially in *Aktion*, the organ of the young literary movement. In my first books (*Die Gottlosen Jahre*, May, 1914; *Die Freundschaft*, May, 1917) social poetry was chaotically mingled with the melancholy, introspective poetry of the self. Yet in my work, *Die Nackten*, 1917, the social substance and the caricatured march of the party choirs yielded to a super-political vision: the poetic form wills to assert its sovereignty over all external revolution (which I lived through in the Munich of Eisner and Landauer). Also, in *Erhebung*, the year-book of new literature and valuation, which I published in 1919 and 1920, the timeless æsthetic principle prevails all the more clearly (for all the contributors), precisely because of their intimate contact with the events of the day."

Wolfenstein is also the author of several short stories, a translation of Shelley, and has dramatic writings in preparation.

PAUL ZECH

The only information which the poet would vouchsafe is that he was born in 1881 at Briesen, Prussia. In a quaint note contributed to the German anthology *Menschheitsdämmerung*, he speaks of himself as a "thick-skulled fellow of Westphalian peasant blood." "Some of my forebears," he says, "dug coal. I myself, after light athletics, Greek, and poor examinations, did not go further than a mere attempt thereat (demanded from within)." Aside from three volumes of prose he has published seven volumes of verse, the first of which appeared in 1910, although he began writing much earlier.

Index of Authors

- Becher, Johannes R., 158
Benn, Gottfried, 148, 150, 186
Brod, Max, 137
- Däubler, Theodor, 175
Dauthendey, Max, 41-51
Dehmel, Richard, 27-39
- Ehrenstein, Albert, 140, 141,
143, 159
- George, Stefan, 53-62
Goll, Iwan, 139, 146, 165, 181
- Herrmann-Neisse, Max, 173
Heym, Georg, 152, 178, 183
Heynicke, Kurt, 157, 163, 172,
185
Holz, Arno, 15-26
- Klabund, 147, 168, 176, 177
Klemm, Wilhelm, 142, 162, 179
- Lasker-Schüler, Else, 103-111
Leonhardt, Rudolf, 156
Lichtenstein, Alfred, 182
- Mayer, Paul, 161, 170, 180
Mombert, Alfred, 81-87
Morgenstern, Christian, 89-102
- Rilke, Rainer Maria, 63-79
- Schickele, René, 171
Stadler, Ernst, 169
Studer-Goll, Claire, 174
- Trakl, George, 144
- Vagts, Alfred, 164
von Hatzfeld, Adolf, 135, 166
von Liliencron, Detlev, 3-14
- Wegner, Armin T., 145
Werfel, Franz, 113-130
- Zech, Paul, 155

